■ BUSINESS / B1

Heavy losses on Wall Street spark selling spree; RP stocks post biggest loss in 5 years

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E-payment for MRT, LRT trains eyed

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Filipina convicted in S'pore of chop-chop slay of fellow OFW

■ WORLD / A29

US Senate backs citizenship for illegal immigrants with 2-year residency

Skeptical Emata pal now looking for 'lechon' money

By the PDI Mindanao, Visayas and Southern Luzon Bureaus

DAVAO CITY—A CLOSE FRIEND OF ERWIN "Pastor" Emata's yesterday said he would now have to find the wherewithal to produce a roast pig to celebrate the latter's successful climb of Mt. Everest.

Admitting that he had been skeptical that Emata

SKEPTICAL/ A21

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
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No shame in being called GMA lapdog but ...

By Philip C. Tubeza

TUTA PERO NANGANGA-GAT!

DAVAO DEL SUR REP. Douglas Cagas says he feels no shame about being called a lapdog of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But he says he also would not hesitate to join

NO SHAME/ A22

THAT TOWERING FEELING: Erwin "Pastor" (the nickname for praying every step of the way) Emata summits the world's highest mountain at 5:24 a.m. Nepal time (7:24 a.m Philippine time) on May 18. And so it has come to pass the past week that the Filipinos ever in urgent search of heroes have found new exciting role models in mountaineers Leo Oracion and Emata.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO OF EMATA TRAINING AT MOUNT AYLMER IN NEW ZEALAND IN MARCH 2005

Second Filipino conquers Everest

Garduce expected to reach summit tomorrow

By Alcuin Papa

BARELY 24 HOURS AFTER LEO ORACION ANnounced that "the Philippine eagle has landed" on the summit of Mt. Everest, a second Filipino made quick work of the ascent.

Erwin "Pastor" Emata, a native of Davao, left Everest's Camp 4 (8,000 meters or 26,000 feet) on Wednesday at 9:35 p.m. Nepal time (11:35 p.m. in Manila) and made it to the peak of the world's highest mountain in just seven hours and 49 minutes with the aid of oxygen.

He made it yesterday at 5:24 a.m. Nepal time (7:24 a.m. in Manila), or four hours ahead of schedule.

Both Oracion and Emata are members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE). From Camp 4, Oracion reached the peak in 15 hours.

Pemba Dorje Sherpa of Nepal set the record for the fastest ascent from Everest's Base Camp to the summit at eight hours and 10 minutes on May 21, 2004.

Oracion and Emata, both 32, are now at Camp 2 (6,400 meters or 21,000 feet) where the FPMEE had stocked food and equipment. At noon today, they are expected to reach Base Camp (5,400 meters or 17,700 feet) and to partake of a special meal prepared by other FPMEE members.

Upon reaching the summit, Emata immediately radioed FPMEE expedition leader Arturo Valdez at Base Camp.

His first words were "It's so cold here," Valdez reported in a radio interview.

Emata, who was among 60 other climbers mostly from Spain, was the first in the group to make it to the top.

"Pastor's time is really above average," Butch Sebastian, coleader of the FPMEE expedition, told the INQUIRER.

"He is really a strong climber," Sebastian said, adding:

"Our preparations and training really helped. He had an early start, so he was able to get ahead of his group. Also, he is in great condition, and he had a lot of determination."

Sebastian also noted that unlike Oracion who had to deal with

SECOND/ A21

City of Manila bans 'Da Vinci Code'

By Tina G. Santos

MOVIEGOERS IN MANILA MAY have to go to neighboring cities to watch "The Da Vinci Code" after the city council yesterday passed a resolution prohibiting the showing of the controversial movie.

The resolution said the movie, which was based on US author Dan Brown's explosive novel, "is undoubtedly offensive and contrary to established religious beliefs which cannot take precedence over the right of the persons involved in the film to freedom of expression."

The resolution, which was passed just hours before cinemas in Manila and other parts of the metropolis began showing the movie, cited a provision in the Revised Penal Code that made it "a crime to exhibit films which offend a religion."

Councilor Rolando Valeriano, one of the authors of the resolution, said the ban would take effect today after theater owners in Manila shall have been furnished copies of the measure.

The film's premise that Jesus

CITY OF MANILA/ A23

THE DA VINCI CODE 05.18.06

MEGA BILLBOARD of the most controversial film in recent memory appears to be moving along with a bus on Edsa, and may be on its road to perdition as it opens across Asia on Thursday to lamentations and the gnashing of teeth.

Third Filipino climber on track for 1-2-3 finish

By Luige A. del Puerto and Tony S. Bergonia

ROMI GARDUCE REACHED Camp 4 on Mt. Everest yesterday afternoon and will push on toward the summit at 8 p.m., Nepal time, according to his local contacts.

"Romi reached Camp 4 at 1:55 p.m. Nepal time (3:55 p.m. in Manila)," said Ramir Orteza, head of GMA 7's News and Public Affairs and Corporate Publicity. "He says the wind is getting stronger, compared to the last two days."

Orteza dismissed a report that Garduce had been struck with fever, which was why he was lagging behind fellow mountaineers Leo Oracion and Erwin "Pastor" Emata.

"I don't think that's true," Orteza said. "Romi is OK. His summit assault starts tonight at 8

THIRD/ A21

'A thriller, not a historical document'

By Paul Daza

REVIEW

AT A PACKED SCREENING YESterday of "The Da Vinci Code" in Cubao, Quezon City, there was an audible gasp from the audience during one scene. This was when Holy Grail expert Leigh Teabing, played by actor Ian McKellen, stated that Mary Magdalene was pregnant with Jesus Christ's child as He was being crucified. Teabing added that the Catholic Church had been covering this up for years because if word got out, people would see Jesus Christ as a mere man and Christianity would collapse.

Is all the fuss over the movie version of Dan Brown's controversial book warranted?

"The Da Vinci Code" stars Tom Hanks as Robert Langdon, a Harvard symbologist who gets drawn into a search for the Holy Grail when he's implicated in a murder at the Louvre Museum in Paris. Accompanied by Sophie Neveu (Audrey

DA VINCI/ A22

Time mag writer placed on watch list

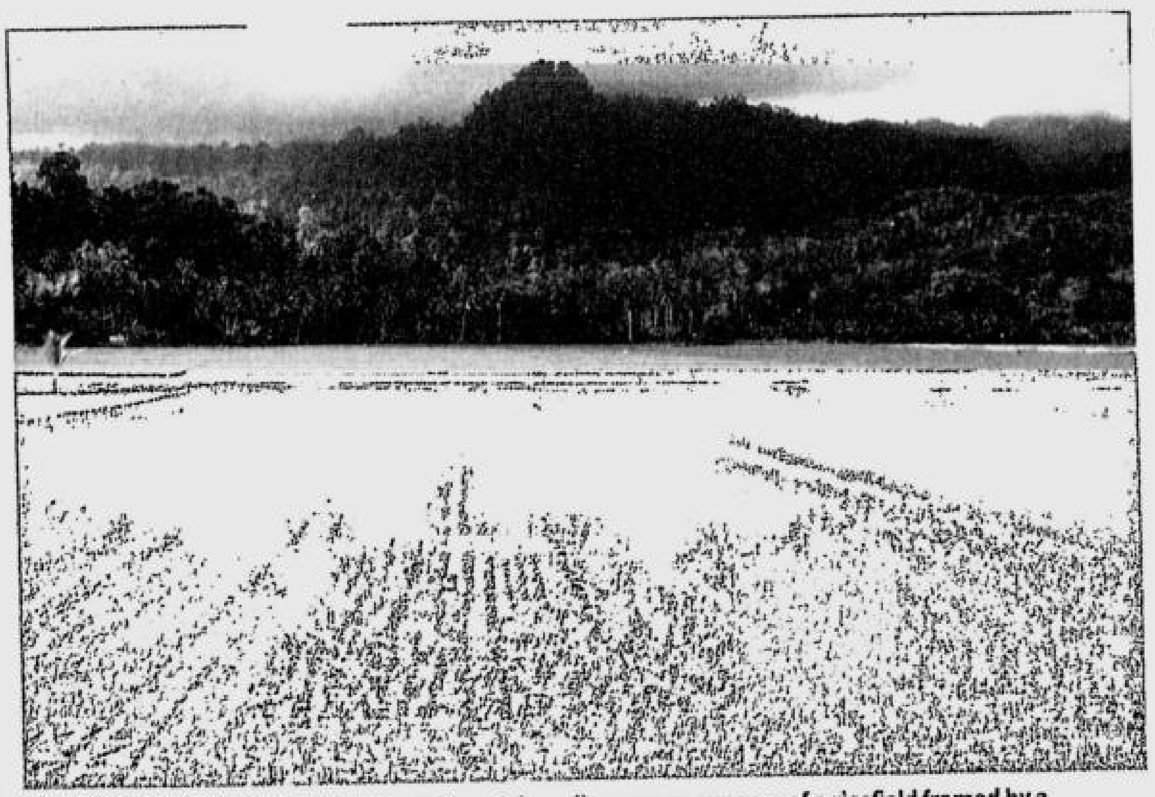
By Armand N. Nocum

THE GOVERNMENT HAS PLACED a Filipino journalist working for Time magazine on its watch list as it deepens its crackdown on politicians and businessmen behind the alleged Feb. 24 coup attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said he had ordered the Bureau of Immigration to put Time's Philippine correspondent Nelly Sindayen on the list to compel her to shed light on the alleged plot.

Sindayen earlier coauthored an article in the international

TIME/ A23



POETRY RECOLLECTED in the tranquility of the yellow-green expanse of a ricefield framed by a mountain forest in Kiamba town, Sarangani province.

AQUILES ZONIO/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

OPUS DEI IN RP

'Secular mentality but following Church agenda'

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

(Conclusion)

SPECIAL REPORT

A SECULAR MENTALITY. THIS IS what an Opus Dei member should have when doing God's work, Jesus Estanislao, a noted economist and Opus Dei numerary, stresses again and again. It is a Christian spirituality for ordinary people aiming for personal sanctification.

"We do not use our affiliation with Opus Dei and come out as one on an issue," he says.

Members do not necessarily share the same views, Estanislao says. They are mostly standalone decision-makers, each one acting according to his or her own lights. Prayer, study, reflection and the teachings of the church help them navigate through the secular.

A former finance secretary, Estanislao chairs the Institute of Corporate Directors. He is also the president and CEO of the Institute for Solidarity in Asia. This is one way of pursuing the Opus Dei calling and "the agenda of the church" in the world.

"Where the church pushes the cart," Estanislao says, "we push our cart in that same direction."

Today there are approximately 3,000 Opus Dei members in the Philippines, both male (70 priests among them) and female.

SECULAR/ A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Central Luzon and Palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/18/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Second FrontPage

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Palace, Senate trade barbs on Cha-cha

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Juliet Labog-Javellana and Jerome Aning

MALACAÑANG IS PEEVED that the Senate has shut the door on a proposal to turn Congress into a Constituent Assembly to amend the Constitution just one day after it agreed to sit down with members of the House of Representatives to find ways out of the impasse on Charter change.

"It's a serious and basic procedural issue that the Senate and House panels should perhaps have discussed first before one of them made an interpretation and took a stand on. That's what the agreement... was all about," said Gabriel Claudio, the President's adviser on political affairs.

Senate President Franklin Drilon's quick retort was that the Palace should leave the Senate and House alone.

"Amending the Constitution is basically a legislative function," Drilon said. "Malacañang cannot approve or veto a resolution which will propose amendments to the Constitution."

He added: "Malacañang should not interfere because this is a legislative matter which, under the Constitution, is left to the Congress. Any doubt on the legality of the process we're suggesting will ultimately be settled in the Supreme Court, not by Malacañang."

Claudio said that during the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) meeting at the Palace last Tuesday, the senators agreed that they would discuss less contentious matters with their counterparts in the House before tackling the more difficult ones.

On Wednesday, the Senate committee on constitutional amendments chaired by Sen. Richard Gordon declared that changing the Charter through a Constituent Assembly as espoused by the House was not among the options allowed by the Constitution.

"The agreement in Ledac was to see first what substantive issues about the proposed amendments they can see eye-to-eye on. For example, making the Constitution's economic provisions more conducive to investments growth before tackling the contentious issue of how to amend or revise the Charter," said Claudio.

"Tapping the Gordon and (Rep. Constantino) Jaraula committees to dialog and bridge existing chasms should have been the first move. I hope the two panels can still come together with open minds," Claudio said. "While the Gordon doctrine may be legally feasible, the question is whether it will open the Senate's doors to constitutional change and reform or keep them bolted."

The Senate has long questioned the House's contention that the Constitution can be changed through a constituent assembly where both chambers vote as one. While Malacañang is still hoping Congress will convene as a Constituent Assembly, the President has endorsed a parallel move to change the Constitution through a people's initiative.

Gordon is set to present the Senate's position to Jaraula, his counterpart in the House, in their first dialogue next Tuesday. *(See related story on this page)*

Meanwhile, opponents of Charter change staged a "dancing protest" outside the Commission on Elections' central office in Manila yesterday afternoon to denounce the administration's moves to amend Constitution.

The Black and White Movement led a group of 50 women in dancing the tango at the Comelec gates in Intramuros. The group is part of the larger STOP Cha-cha coalition launched last month.

The protesters, led by former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman and Teresita Deles, also a former presidential adviser, danced the tango with the help of real-life dance instructors to show them the difficult steps. They chanted "Oust Gloria" as they danced.

With Kris Bayos

'Massage' diplomacy: House softens position on Con-Ass

By Michael Lim Ubac and Juliet Labog-Javellana

EMPLOYING WHAT THEY TERMED "MASsage diplomacy," Charter change advocates in the House of Representatives led by Rep. Constantino Jaraula said yesterday they agreed with the Senate that proposed constitutional amendments could be drafted by both chambers in the same way that they draft new laws.

Jaraula told the INQUIRER that the House would bend "backwards, forward, sideways" just to accomplish its goal of abolishing the two-chamber Congress and replacing it with a unicameral parliament.

Jaraula is Speaker Jose de Venecia's pointman in the Charter-change initiative as chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments.

"We're trying to massage relations with the senators," said Jaraula, when asked why he was not refuting his counterparts in the Senate, who have rejected the House's demand to turn Congress into a Constituent Assembly with both chambers voting as one.

After agreeing to a dialogue with the House, the Sen. Richard Gordon's committee on constitutional amendments held a caucus last Wednesday and took the position that the 1987 Constitution does not provide for a constituent assembly as a mode for charter amendments.

"The consensus is that there is no need for a constituent assembly because the Constitution is very clear that any senator or congressman can (propose to) amend the Constitution or even revise the Constitution by mere resolution, in which case it is treated as any ordinary piece of legislation which can be referred to the standing committee of each house," Gordon said at a news conference.

"And when it's approved by three-fourths vote, it becomes a proposed amendment to the Constitution which then is submitted to a plebiscite," Gordon added.

Gordon said the constituent assembly as a mode for amending the Charter was provided for in the 1935 Constitution but not by the current Charter. The other modes for amending or revising the charter as a constitutional convention and people's initiative.

The House's less-confrontational tone was in line with De Venecia's call last Tuesday at a meeting in Malacañang to "restore official diplomatic relations" with the Senate, said Jaraula.

Asked about Gordon's statement that amendments could be proposed by simple congressional resolutions, Jaraula replied, "That can be done. We have flexibility. Precisely, we're dealing with another chamber, so we have to move backwards, forward, sideways."

He said he also agreed with Gordon that the the Constitution does not provide for a Constituent Assembly. "Yes, that's true. It's a term attached to a legislative body that is addressing constitutional matters as distinguished from ordinary legislation."

However, he said he would still appeal to the senators to senators to consider a constituent assembly to speed things up.

"We have no time..." he said. "Jaraula is not arguing against them but we have to be practical in the light of what the House perceives to be an imperative change."

Jaraula pointed to the "difference of perception and attitude" as the greatest stumbling block to Cha-cha. "They don't feel it's urgent. We do," he said.

He said his committee would "discuss, analyze and approve proposed amendments" which would then be presented to senators during the joint caucus.

"When we sit down, then they will ask us what we want. This is what we want: changes in the political and economic aspects, including the shift to a federal form of government. Then they will ask us of the direction we will take."

During his new conference, Gordon produced a copy of the House rules which states, "The adoption of resolutions proposing amendments to or revision of the Constitution shall follow the procedure for the enactment of bills."

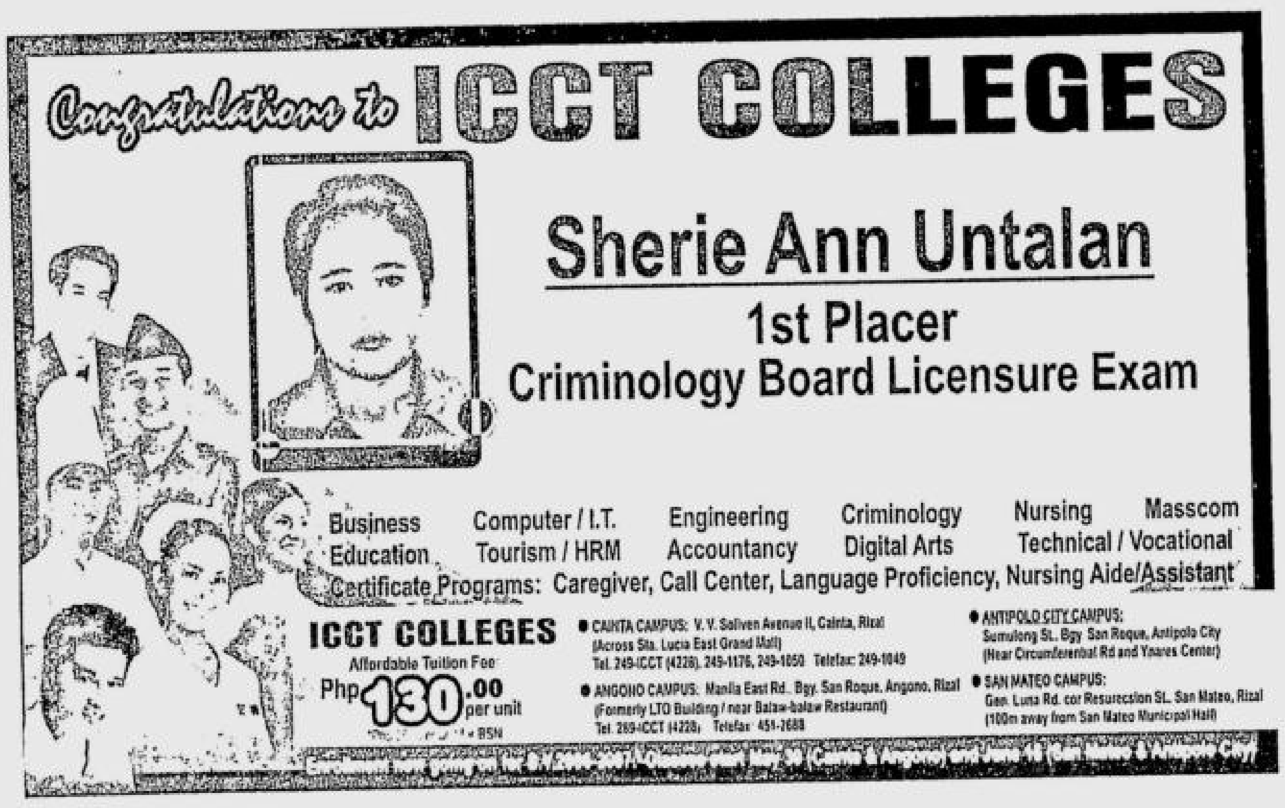
"We're merely saying to the House: 'It's in your rules,'" Gordon said.

Gordon said any congressman or senator can file a resolution proposing an amendment to the charter and this will go through the normal course of legislation.

Under the system, a bill filed in the House or Senate is referred to the chamber's appropriate committee before adoption by the entire chamber. Once approved, the bill is sent to the other chamber.

If there are conflicting provisions, the Senate and the House convene a bicameral conference committee which reconciles the differences.

"If we cannot agree, the amendment is lost," Gordon said.



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Equatorial Guinea president due

By Volt Contreras and Christine O. Avendaño

THE PRESIDENT OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA is arriving today for a four-day state visit, with possible oil deals with the Philippines on top of the agenda, the Department of Foreign Affairs announced yesterday.

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo is scheduled to meet with congressional and business leaders. He will also visit tourist spots and agricultural and fishery projects in Bacolod City and Pangasinan.

The DFA said Obiang will meet with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang at 3 this afternoon to discuss partnerships and joint ventures, especially in oil exploration, extraction and processing.

A Palace statement said President Arroyo and President Mbasogo are expected to hold bilateral talks and witness the signing of several agreements.

The Central African nation maintains an estimated 1.28-billion barrels of oil in reserve and hosts some 2,500 overseas Filipino workers, the DFA said.

Obiang is expected to land at Villamor Air Base at noon today. His delegation will include his wife, Constancia Mangue de Obiang.

Tonight, a state dinner will be tendered in Malacañang for the visiting president and his party.

On Saturday, Mbasogo will lay a wreath at the Rizal Monument and visit the Asian Hospital in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

He will then fly to Bacolod City to visit the agricultural estate of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

He will be in Pangasinan on Sunday to tour the various aquaculture projects there.

On Monday, Mbasogo will visit the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine in Alabang and the Philippine National Oil Co. in Taguig City before enplaning for his country.

Pacific plan holders post bail

By Tarra V. Quismundo

NEARLY A DOZEN HOLDERS OF EDUCAtion plans purchased from the pre-need firm Pacific Plans Inc. posted a total of P230,000 in bail at a Makati court yesterday pending trial on libel charges brought on by a company that said it had grown weary of the alleged bad-mouthing by irate customers protesting its inability to meet obligations under the plans.

Eleven officers of the Parents Enabling Parents Coalition (PEP) Coalition shelled out P20,000 each to stay out of jail after Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Reinato Quilala issued a warrant for their arrest on libel charges filed by the Yuchengco Group of Companies last November. Pacific belongs to the group.

PEP is an organization of plan holders pursuing claims from the troubled PPI, which is working on a rehabilitation plan recently approved by another Makati court.

The plan holders who posted bail were Philip Piccio, Ma. Anabella Santos, John Joseph Gutierrez, Jose Dizon, Rolando Pareja, Wonina Bonifacio, Cornelio Zafra, Vicente Ortueste, Victoria Gomez Jacinto, Juvencio Pereche and Elvira Cruz.

Lawyer Jessie John P. Gimenez, president of one of the Yuchengco companies who filed the libel suit, welcomed the Makati prosecutor's decision to bring the complaint to court for trial.

The case "should then go its normal judicial course and allow the court to decide whether our detractors are guilty or not. Stage-managed dramatics is not a defense," he said in a statement.

"We kept our peace since April last year against the vicious and slanderous attacks as we try for plan holders to understand the situation that the company is in and to give it time for rehabilitation."

RP seaman in Queen Mary 2 killing of fellow Pinoy now in police custody

THE OFFICERS OF LUXURY LINER Queen Mary 2 have turned over to British police the Filipino crewman accused of killing a co-worker compatriot while the ship was still in the high seas on May 12, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday.

Rodolfo Juangca, 49, was held at the Lyndhurst police station in Hampshire shortly after the QM2 docked at her home port in Southampton, England, on May 17, the DFA said.

DFA spokesman Bert Asuque said the body of the victim, crewman Joel Tagaan, was still being kept in a hospital morgue in the coastal town of Groeningen, the Netherlands.

Tagaan died of serious head injuries while being airlifted to that town for treatment, following a "fight" with Juangca, according to earlier reports from the Philippine Embassy in London.

The fight took place below deck at the ship's rest and recreation area, and was reportedly witnessed by other Filipino and foreign crew members.

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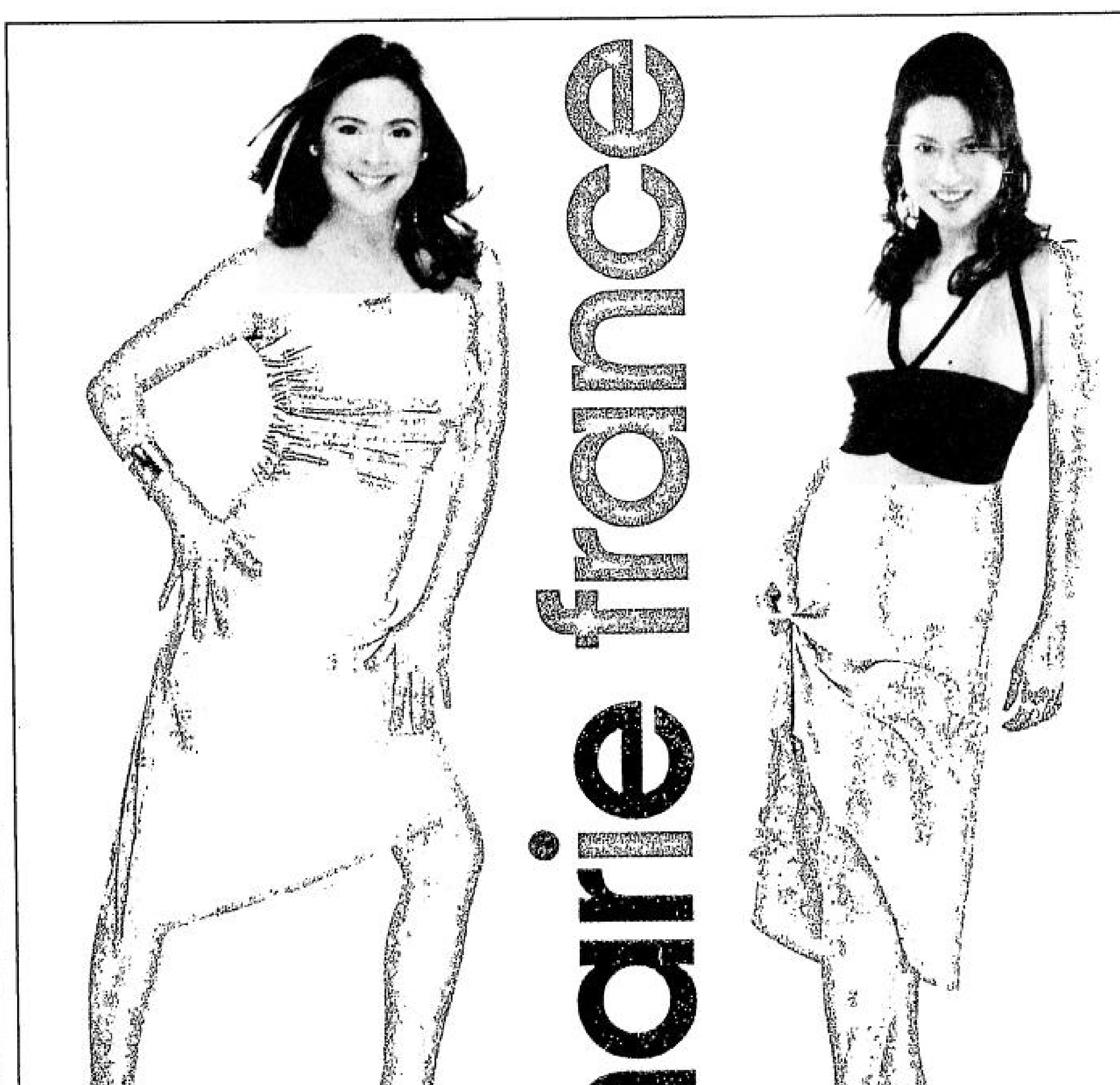

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Budget surplus to help ease oil crunch

By Christine O. Avendaño

ELATED OVER THE P17.6-BILLION budget surplus, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday some of the money would go toward promoting alternative fuels to ease the burden of high oil prices.

The President said more jatropha trees, whose seeds are a source of biodiesel, would be planted and stoves fueled by plant oils would be produced on a massive scale.

The President presided over a demonstration of how effective jatropha, also known as *tuba* and *sambo*, was as a substitute for diesel and on the use of plant oils as an alternative to the more expensive liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

"We want to use the money to make life better for those suffering from the high oil prices," the President said in Malacañang.

In a statement she read, Ms Arroyo also thanked the government bureaucracy for "keeping spending down and public service efficiency up at a time when the people are valiantly carrying the burden of tough fiscal reforms besides the surge of world oil prices."

The government posted a P17.6-billion budget surplus in April, five times higher than the surplus it posted a year earlier.

Ms Arroyo said the government had initially allotted P500 million for the planting of jatropha in military camps and for research on its "highest yielding species."

As for the plant oil stove, the President said she would support its "mass production and distribute some samples to 18 hot-spot urban poor communities."

Jun Lozada, president of Philippine Forest Corp., told the President jatropha nurseries had been put up in military bases like Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija and Camp Aquino in Tarlac.

At present, the government has 150,000 hectares planted to jatropha, while the private sector has three times the land planted to the tree, Lozada said.

Actually, the government was still testing jatropha, according to National Economic Developing Authority (Neda) chair Romulo Neri, who added that he did not want to encourage the private sector to come in at this time until the government had documented the results of its experience in the military camps.

"I just want to make sure it's encouraging on a bigger scale," Neri said, noting that the tests "will tell us how viable it is on a commercial scale."

For now, the country's oil import bill stood at $7 billion and 20 or 25 percent of this was for diesel, Neri said.

The plant oil stove, meanwhile, currently costs P2,300 but Neri said its inventors, a team from the Leyte State University, were studying how to bring down its cost.

Neri said the stove was economical because it used vegetable, coconut and regular cooking oil.

In yesterday's demonstration by Dr. Robert Guarte, dean of the LSU College of Engineering and Agri-Industries, the stove was made to run on coconut oil.

Guarte said the stove could operate for 10-12 hours using only three liters of oil. He said they had tested jatropha oil on the stove and it worked as well.

The stove is currently available in Leyte but will be mass produced by next year, Guarte said.

LYN RILLON

PRESIDENT Arroyo and Neda chair Romulo Neri watch the plant oil stove in operation.

STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR FROM ESA IS HOT, NEW FASHION RETAILER.

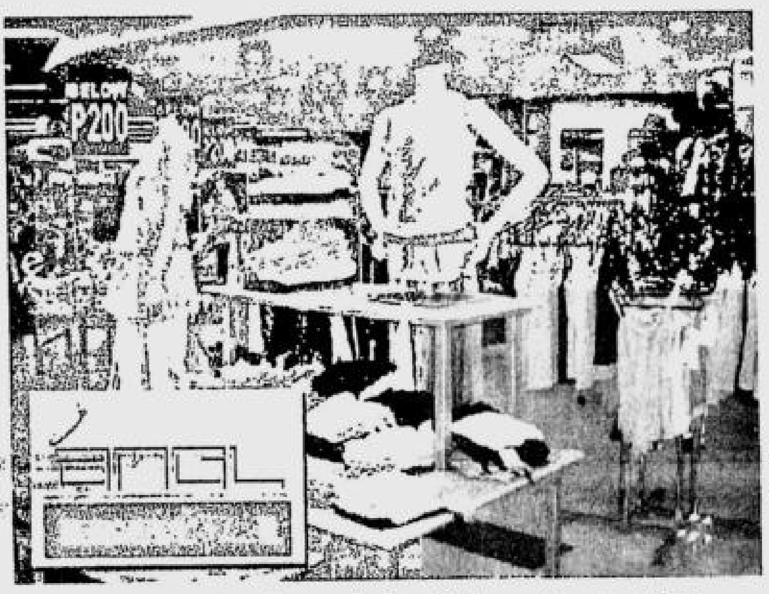
Entrepreneurs School of Asia (ESA) students have successful businesses before graduating college.

As a child, Mariel Rivera, was always fascinated with fashion but for most of her life it was just an interest. Last month, however, Mariel entered the fashion industry and had a soft launch of her own clothing line - ANGL (pronounced as Angel) at Robinsons Department Store in Ermita. Her brand's target markets are female teens and young females. In one month, ANGL has become part of the top 20 brands being sold by the store. And, the department store has already asked her to begin supplying to their other branches. Mariel's design philosophy is to design clothes she herself would like to wear- trendy, high end designs - but at prices less than what designer brands charge.

As a B.S. Entrepreneurship student in the Entrepreneurs School of Asia (ESA.), Mariel not only acquired the business tools and knowledge but more importantly realized her passion and transformed it into a business. Armed with the entrepreneurial skills and mindset from ESA, she is now on her way to become the next big thing in Philippine fashion.

*"I didn't really think I could have my own apparel business, and start succeeding, even before I graduated from college." **Mariel Rivera, Student Entrepreneur***

Taking on the responsibility of setting-up and managing their own business at such an early age makes ESA students more mature, decisive and confident. This gives them a clear advantage over their peers. Mariel Rivera is one of the 30 new student entrepreneur graduates of ESA for 2006



Mariel Rivera's products on display at Robinsons Department Store

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Labor chief clarifies ban on tourist workers to UAE

By Jerome Aning

LABOR SECRETARY PATRICIA STO. TOMAS yesterday clarified that the government was not considering implementing a total or a partial ban on the deployment of documented overseas Filipino workers to the United Arab Emirates.

"What we are against, consistently, is illegal recruitment that lures would-be OFWs to enter the host country as undocumented migrants without proper protection, which makes them vulnerable and prone to human trafficking, exploitation and abuse," she said.

The labor department earlier warned Filipinos going to UAE with visit visas from seeking employment in the territory without proper documentation and permits.

Reports abound about so-called Filipino "tourist workers" being underpaid and abused by unscrupulous employers.

Sto. Tomas said that the UAE was set to implement a law which sought to curb the trafficking of persons and children for profit.

Sto. Tomas said the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in UAE's capital Abu Dhabi reported that a draft of the law had been referred to the the country's justice ministry for revision and approval.

She said that the law represented a milestone in the efforts to eradicate human trafficking and said its implementation would support steps being taken by the Philippines to check individuals and organizations who illegally recruit OFWs to the Middle East, using the Emirates as transit point.

Sto. Tomas said children, women, unskilled workers, and jobseekers posing as tourists offered vulnerable targets for trafficking rings. She said that human trafficking and people smuggling had been raking in huge profits.

The UAE remains the third-favored destination of documented OFWs, next to the Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong.

The number of documented OFWs that have been deployed to the UAE, considered as the Hong Kong of the Middle East, reached 81,707 in 2005, representing a growth of 19.48 percent from the 68,386 OFWs in the Emirates in 2004.

Sto. Tomas called attention to a report of the United Nations' Office on Drug and Crime which said that human trafficking, wherein people are abducted or recruited across countries for forced labor, prostitution, and other manipulative activities, had become a global phenomenon.

UNDOC defines trafficking in persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by means of threat, coercion, abduction, and fraud or deception for sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, and the removal of organs.

It also involves the giving or receiving of payments to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.

Corrections

IN THE MAY 3 ISSUE, a story on Page A12—"Pinoy-Swiss strips down to shorts at Naia"—erroneously reported the nationality and country of residence of the man who stripped down to his underpants at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. The man, Silvio Ronga, is an Italian-Swiss—not Filipino-Swiss. He lives in Goteberg, Sweden—not Switzerland.

* * *

IN THE MAY 16 ISSUE, a front-page article—"Childless couples to join Obando fertility rites today"—misstated that the Obando fertility rites had been scheduled to start on that day. The Obando fertility rites are held every year from May 17 to 19.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Morales sworn in as customs chief, finally

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERday swore into office Napoleon Morales as permanent customs commissioner apparently as a reward for boosting his agency's collections in the last five months while in an acting capacity.

President Arroyo was impressed by the BOC's performance in the first four months of the year where it exceeded its goal by P3.659 billion and is on track of hitting its 2006 goal of P197 billion.

"I'm glad that you have met your target, congratulations, all the best," the President said during the ceremony.

Morales, who has been with the bureau for 38 years, starting as a messenger, was appointed acting customs commissioner in December last year largely on his sterling record at the Batangas port in place of Alexander Arevalo.

Morales is the first official customs commissioner since Alberto Lina resigned from office in July to join the Hyatt 10 which sought for the President's resignation.

Disappointed

The President, however, was disappointed with the performance of the Bureau of Internal Revenue in the first four months that she personally called Revenue Commissioner Jose Marie Bunag ordering him to cut short his trip in Germany and come back immediately to explain his agency's woeful collections.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves has blamed the low remittances from the large taxpayers' unit (made up of the top 1,000 corporations) as more companies used tax credits to offset their tax liabilities this year.

Teves has ordered the BIR to verify whether the tax credits used were genuine and to make an inventory of all tax credits still in the market.

Presidential chief of staff Michael Defensor said that BOC personnel were set to enjoy a bonanza by yearend because of their strong collection. "I think a janitor at the BOC would get as much as P65,000 bonus if they continue their good job up to the end of the year," Defensor said.

In contrast, Defensor said the BIR lost a golden chance to get a windfall from their improved collection efforts this year after the agency incurred a P10 billion collection shortfall in April largely due to a steep drop in tax payments of top 1,000 corporations.

Poor performance

"It's really a pity because all of the BIR's regional district offices surpassed their collection targets. Only the Large Taxpayers Unit did them in because of its poor performance," said Defensor.

The President created a rewards and incentive fund and revenue performance evaluation board under Republic Act No. 9335 aimed at spurring the BIR and BOC to boost their collections.

If the BIR and BOC surpass their target by up to 30 percent, 15 percent of the excess collection would be funneled into a fund to be divided among members at the end of the year.

The regional district offices that surpass their targets can still get incentives (10 percent of their excess collections) if the BIR and BOC's total collections do not fall more than 10 percent of the target. The law also specifies that the evaluation board can sack BIR and BOC officials for failure to meet targets.

Domantay; 57

RODOLFO DIAZ DOmantay died on May 15 at 10:16 a.m at the Manila Doctors Hospital. He was 57.

His remains lie at Jasper Chapel Dulce Memorial Homes, on Abad Santos and Dinalupihan Streets in Tondo, Manila. He is survived by wife Josefine; daughters Joyce, Roselle, Jocelyn, Renee, Joanna, and Rubee; brothers Jose and Arturo; and sisters Leticia, Socorro, Divina and Minerva.

Interment will be on Sunday at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina.

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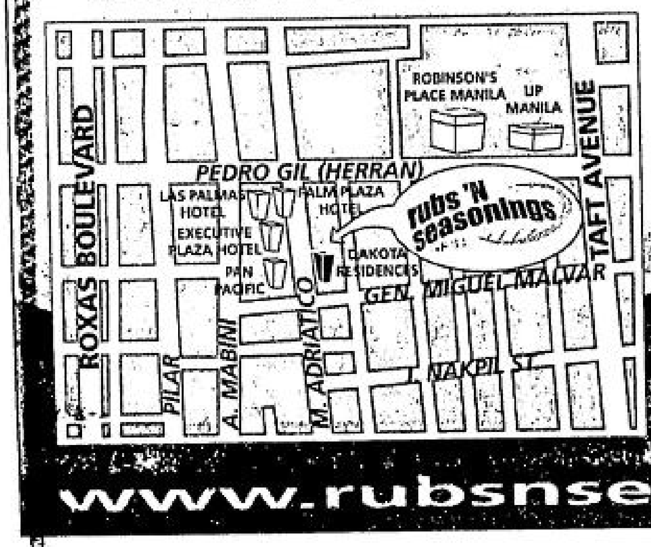

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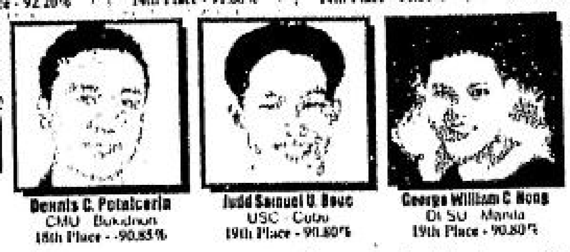

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REUTER

WEDGE IN RP-US TIES?

Subic rape case worries priest

By Nikko Dizon

A PROMINENT AMERICAN PRIEST who has served in the Philippines most of his life has expressed concern the controversial Subic rape case has been turned into a divisive issue between two allied nations.

Fr. James Reuter, S.J. told the INQUIRER in a recent interview that was how he and the four accused US Marines felt about the media reports on the case, as well as the continuing street protests staged by the militant feminist group Gabriela.

Reuter, who turns 90 on May 21, is the spiritual adviser of the Marines. He is practically considered to be a Filipino having been conferred honorary citizenship in recognition of his long years of service to Philippine education, among other things.

"They feel the judgment is not against them so much, it's against the whole United States," Reuter said, referring to Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier and Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Dominic Duplantis and Keith Silkwood who stand accused of raping a 22-year-old Filipino woman in the Subic Freeport in November last year.

The INQUIRER spoke with Reuter on Tuesday as he waited for the new papal nuncio, Archbishop Fernando Filoni, to arrive at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"That distresses me because they (the media and militant groups) are making it into an international issue," said Reuter, who is also the executive secretary of the local Catholic Church's National Office of Mass Media.

Reuter said the local media had been particularly "anti-American" in its reports about the rape case.

"They (the accused) feel that nothing is being said in their defense, and that all of the media is anti-American. Not against those four but against the United States," Reuter said.

The placards raised by the militant groups, he added, also said it all.

From "Jail the Yankees" and "Down with the VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement)" to "Jail the rapists," the protesters had passed judgment on the US and the four accused even before the trial had officially begun, Reuter said.

He said the four Marines remained "stressed, strained and depressed" over their situation.

"They are tired of being in jail. They'd like to get out," Reuter said.

He said Carpentier was particularly anxious to see his wife and two young children in Okinawa, Japan, where the Marines are based.

Reuter said he continued to provide spiritual and moral support to the four men.

From the airport, he said he was going to the US Embassy to say Mass for Duplantis and Carpentier, who were both Catholic.

Aside from saying Mass, Reuter has also been conducting classes for the four on varied subjects, like literature and ethics.

'Juday' gains reprieve in tax case arraignment

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE ARRAIGNMENT YESTERDAY OF MOVIE actress Judy Ann Santos on tax evasion charges was cancelled by the Court of Tax Appeals after she failed to show up, claiming lack of sufficient notice from the court.

CTA Presiding Justice Ernesto Acosta granted the request of Santos's lawyer, Bonifacio Alentajan, after the latter informed the court he only received the notice the day before the scheduled arraignment, short of the required three-day notice.

As such, Alentajan said, he was not able to relay the notice either to his client, who was taping a television series, or to her manager Alfie Lorenzo.

Alentajan also told the CTA he was filing a writ seeking a review of the case in the Court of Appeals in order to block the arraignment which was reset to May 23.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue had filed the case against Santos and the DOJ upheld the BIR's findings that Santos had incurred an income tax deficiency of P2.714 million in 2002.

On Jan. 13, 2006, Santos filed a motion to quash the case but this was dismissed by the CTA which found reasonable grounds to believe tax evasion had been committed.

Santos then filed a motion to reconsider her motion to quash but, again, this was rejected by the CTA.

The DOJ said it found no merit for a reinvestigation of the case after preliminary investigation found the actress had failed to declare her combined income from the ABS-CBN television network, Viva Productions and Star Cinema in 2002.

According to the DOJ resolution dated Oct. 1, 2005, Santos had "willfully, unlawfully and feloniously" filed a false and fraudulent tax return for 2002 where she indicated a gross income of P8.033 million when her correct income was P16.396 million, a difference of P8.363 million.

SANTOS

But Alentajan said the information was inaccurate since BIR records would show that there was no notice of tax assessment and demand for payment sent to the actress.

"If there was no investigation, no assessment and no demand for payment of tax deficiency, how could this have ripened into a crime," Alentajan told reporters.

Alentajan said the BIR was only engaged in a "fishing expedition" when it said it was still investigating Santos's case and that any new evidence against her would be filed in court.

"Is that not a fishing expedition? *Ihahabla kita pero iimbestigahan pa kita* (I'll sue you but I'll have to investigate you first)?" he said.

Vice gov says bishop in mining probe biased

THE VICE GOVERNOR OF ALBAY YESTERDAY said the Catholic bishop heading the Rapu-Rapu Fact Finding Commission was a biased antimining advocate as such was not qualified to head the body.

Vice Governor James Calisin said in a press statement yesterday that he had the "smoking gun" showing that Bishop Arturo Bastes, who was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the Lafayette mining issue in Sorsogon, was openly antimining and violated his own rules against conflict of interest.

Lafayette, which operates the copper and gold mine in Rapu-rapu island located off the eastern coast of Albay province, has been accused of spilling contaminated mining wastes into the region's waters. Lafayette has asked the government to allow test runs on its operations, but Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said he will not allow test runs until after the commission has submitted its findings.

"I have the video of Bishop Arturo Bastes of Sorsogon lambasting mining in general and accusing Lafayette of contaminating Sorsogon's fishes and waters without any scientific basis just several days before the President formed the Rapu Rapu Fact-Finding Commission where he is the chair," Calisin said.

Besides, Calisin said, the bishop himself said the members of his commission, under the rules he himself drafted, should demonstrate objectivity, neutrality and impartiality and should not have previously expressed any opinion for or against the Lafayette issue.

Conflict of interest

"With Bishop Bastes a vocal antimining advocate, he is now in a conflict of interest of his own making. How can we trust him if he breaks his own rules? How can we trust the commission's impartiality? With all due respect to the bishop, he is biased and he should have not been part of the commission from Day One," he said.

Calisin said a video taken on Feb. 17, Bastes went to the island of Rapu Rapu to warn the crowd about mining and Lafayette.

He quoted the bishop as saying: "...The seas of Sorsogon are dead because of mining, the effects of Lafayette mining. Our fish are no longer edible...I can no longer eat tangigue and malasugue and all the different kinds of fish because of what happened here in Rapu Rapu."

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY, through its MEZ Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract : Proposed Asphalt Overlay Project of MEZ-Phase II
Location : MEZ I, Lapu-lapu City
Brief Description : Supply of Labor, Materials, Equipment and Supervision for Proposed Asphalt Overlay Project of MEZ-Phase II
Approved Budget for the Contract : P13,457,444.09
Contract Duration : 30 calendar days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed similar contract with a value at least 50% of the ABC within the last three years, and have key personnel and own equipment listed below available for the prosecution of the contract:
- Asphalt Batching Plant (production 50 M.T. per hr.)
- Asphalt Paver
- Asphalt Distributor
- Road Roller
- Pneumatic Roller
- Dump Trucks

The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) with application for eligibility — May 12-23, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility forms — May 15-24, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements Deadline — May 25, 2006 5:00 p.m.
4. Notice of Result of Eligibility Check — June 5, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents — June 6-9, 2006
6. Pre-bid Conference — June 13, 2006 2:00 p.m.
7. Receipt & Opening of Bids — June 29, 2006 2:00 p.m.

Eligibility Forms are available at MEZ BAC Secretariat, 2/F PEZA Administration Bldg., MEZ I, Lapu-lapu City upon submission of LOI, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00 to the PEZA Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to BAC at the stated address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check at the same address.

The Bidding Documents may be issued only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 to the PEZA Cashier.

The pre-bid conference and the opening of bids will be conducted at the Conference Room, 2/F PEZA Administration Bldg., Mactan Economic Zone I, Lapu-lapu City.

The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) BELENA B. SUELLO
MEZ BAC Chairperson

(PDI - May 12 & 19, 2006)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY, through its MEZ, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Clean and Green and Facilities Maintenance Services in MEZ
Location : Mactan Economic Zone (MEZ), Ibo, Lapu-lapu City
Brief Description : Supply of Manpower, Tools and Equipment for the Clean and Green Maintenance and Facilities Maintenance of MEZ.
Approved Budget : P5,376,107.51
Contract Duration : 12 months
Delivery Period : Within 30 days from receipt of Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and tools and equipment (owned) available for the prosecution of the project. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use the non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 19 - 29, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	May 30, 2006 2:00 p.m.
3. Deadline for Submission and Opening of Bids	June 15, 2006 2:00 p.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	June 16 - 21, 2006
5. Post-Qualification	June 21 - 23, 2006

Complete set of Bid Documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,500.00 to PEZA-MEZ I Cashier. Bids and other communications may be addressed to MEZ Bid and Awards Committee, 2nd Flr. PEZA Admin Bldg., MEZ I, Lapu-lapu City.

The pre-bid conference and opening of bids shall be conducted at the Conference Room, 2/F PEZA Administration Bldg., Mactan Economic Zone I, Lapu-lapu City.

The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) BELENA B. SUELLO
MEZ BAC Chairperson

(PDI—May 19 & 26, 2006)

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1,504 cases vs minors to be voided by new law

By Cynthia D. Balana

A TOTAL OF 1,504 CRIMINAL CASES INvolving young offenders will soon be dismissed by courts nationwide as a result of the new law, Republic Act No. 9344, which exempts those 15 years and below from any criminal liability.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said this yesterday in a press conference, saying she expected the dismissal of the cases to happen in the next few weeks.

RA 9344, or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, provides that youth offenders aged 15 years and one day to 18 years old can only be criminally charged if they acted out the crime with discernment.

It also outlines the immediate turnover of children in conflict with the law to social workers upon apprehension. The law, which has a retroactive provision, will formally come into effect on May 22, 2006.

"The presumption is that those aged 15 years and below acted without discernment. Those whose cases will be dismissed will be placed under the DSWD facility for rehabilitation until they are ready for turnover to their parents," Cabral said.

She said the bulk of the cases to be dismissed came from Region 9 with 319, followed by Region 7 with 294, and the National Capital Region with 293.

The rest are from Region 11, 162; Region 10, 103; Region 1, 97; Region 8, 77; Region 2, 46; Region 4-B; Caraga, 21; Region 6, 20; and the Cordillera Autonomous Region, 3.

Cabral said the crimes committed were mostly petty ones, and that there was only one case of homicide.

Erap sues for libel

By Norman Bordadora

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA will file multimillion-peso libel charges versus former beauty queen Joelle Pelaez for her claims in a national daily that the detained former leader used her bank accounts to launder P2.9 billion in ill-gotten funds.

Estrada spokesperson Didagen Dilangalen said in a news conference that Estrada has already instructed his lawyer Rene Saguisag to draft the libel complaint against Pelaez and Manila Standard Today, the newspaper that published Pelaez's allegations.

"The story is meant to distract President Estrada who will again testify next week at the Sandiganbayan," Dilangalen said.

Dilangalen said the timing of Pelaez's allegations was suspect, coming at a time when Estrada is about to testify on allegations regarding his alleged ownership of the Jose Velarde bank account that first came to fore during his impeachment trial.

"Why did it take her six years to come out? She should've shouted before. The things she told about happened long ago," Dilangalen said.

Dilangalen said Pelaez will face libel raps in the US.

He said lawyer Leonardo Siguon-Reyna of the Siguion-Reyna, Montecillo and Ongsiako Law Office has already left for the US on Wednesday night to file the suit in behalf of Estrada.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, May 19, 2006
5th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 15:22-31
Gospel: John 15:12-17

Jesus said to his disciples, "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this, to give one's life for one's friends; and you are my friends if you do what I command you.

"I shall not call you servants any more, because servants do not know what their master is about. Instead I have called you friends, since I have made known to you everything I learned from my Father.

"You did not choose me; it was I who chose you and sent you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And everything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you.

"This is my command, that you love one another."

Commentary

The Church gathered sends out a letter declaring the decision of the Holy Spirit which is their decision as well, that they are not to lay added burdens on the new converts. It brought encouragement to the churches. Jesus' commandment demands everything: to love as God loves us, even to lay down our lives for one another, as he did. Nothing else matters much in relation to this commandment, and all traditions, laws, customs, and rites need to be evaluated in light of the Spirit so that loving one another and all others is what we are known for, nothing else.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

Palace appeals SC ruling on EO 464

By Armand N. Nocum

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION IS asking the Supreme Court to reverse its ruling on Executive Order 464, arguing that the President did not act arbitrarily or abuse her authority in issuing the edict barring members of the Cabinet and other officials from appearing in congressional hearings without her prior consent.

In 33-page motion for reconsideration filed Wednesday, Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura said "the President did not act so arbitrarily as to constitute abuse of discretion ... in requiring prior consent from executive officials before appearing in legislative investigations."

"It is respectfully prayed that the decision of this Court dated April 20, 2006 be reconsidered and set aside and another one be entered dismissing the petitions," Nachura said.

Nachura specifically asked the court to reverse its ruling that Sections 2 (b) and 3 of EO 464 were unconstitutional.

These portions of the order stated that the members of the Cabinet; officers of the Armed Forces and Philippine National Police; senior national security officials, among others, were "covered by executive privilege" and should secure the President's "prior consent" before appearing in any congressional inquiry.

The President issued the executive order in September 2005, at the height of congressional inquiries into the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal, the alleged diversion to Ms Arroyo's election campaign of the government's fertilizer fund, and the hiring of an American lobby group to push for amendments to the Philippine Constitution.

In asking the court to reverse its decision, Nachura said that the tribunal had "overlooked certain facts and circumstances, which justify the consent requirement for executive officials appearing in legislative investigations."

"In the instant case, considering the total absence of any guidelines or rules promulgated by the Senate to govern the conduct of its inquiries in aid of legislation or otherwise, it cannot be said, therefore, that the President, who had merely required prior consent from her officials, acted with grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction by issuing the executive order in question," Nachura said.

He added: "Put differently, EO 464 did not violate any Senate rules or guidelines that could serve, in the least, as basis for the allegation that the President has committed any grave abuse of discretion. As such, it is premature for the Court to take cognizance of the present petitions."

According to Nachura, the presidential consent required for the attendance at congressional inquiries of the officials described in the executive order was intended not only to ensure adherence to the doctrine on executive privilege but also to ensure respect for the rights of public officials appearing in congressional investigations.

Nachura asserted that the President may properly prohibit executive officials from appearing in congressional investigations by invoking the doctrine of executive privilege.

"The doctrine of executive privilege is founded upon the basic principle that in order for the President to carry out his constitutional responsibility to enforce the laws, he must be able to protect the confidentiality of certain types of documents and communications within the Executive Branch," he said.

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Spirit behind efforts to help the less fortunate

By Fe Zamora

WHEN MAE AGNES RUSIA FINished high school in 1993, she braced herself for a year ahead as an out-of-school youth.

A year before, an older sister was accepted as a freshman at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Rusia knew that the meager family resources eked out by her on-and-off employed radio technician father and dressmaker-mother would have to go to her sister's daily needs.

During a career-orientation program for graduating students at the Quezon City High School, Rusia got hold of a leaflet from Punlaan School.

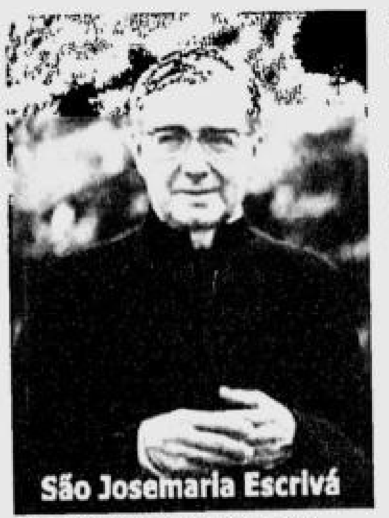
"I was attracted to the P500 monthly allowance; I need not ask for money from my parents," she said in Filipino.

She applied, and was accepted for the Punlaan School's Dual Training Scholarship Program in Food and Beverages Services.

At that time, Rusia said she did not know anything about the Prelature of Opus Dei, the controversial Catholic institution and moving spirit behind Punlaan School.

Student becomes teacher

Today, 30-year-old Rusia teaches baking to underprivileged girls in Punlaan, gratefully returning the training she received as a scholar at the unique professional training school located in San Juan.



ESCRIVA: Opus Dei founder

Trained as a baker in Punlaan, Rusia worked at the Manila Peninsula for five years, and on a cruise liner for a year, earning enough money to help her support two sisters through college and build a house for herself and her parents.

But she did not join Opus Dei, nor does she donate her salary to the organization.

"Joining the Opus Dei is not my vocation, but I am very grateful for everything that I've learned in Punlaan," Rusia, a President Ramon Magsaysay Most Outstanding Worker awardee in 1998, said.

The regular spiritual formation imbued the Punlaan scholars with such values as respect for others, punctuality, honesty, fidelity, trustworthiness, said Rusia, who has a 4-year-old daughter with her husband, Manila Peninsula chief baker Rene Mesina.

100 percent employment

Graduates of Punlaan are sought after by employers in the food industry, which have established partnerships with the institution.

"We have 100 percent employment after graduation," Luz M. Filmer, executive director, said.

In fact, about 500 graduates of the two-year diploma course on food and beverages service are currently employed in top hotels and restaurants here and abroad.

Punlaan School started in the early '70s in a garage in New Manila. It was converted into a classroom for household helpers by a group of women who were inspired by the words of St. Josemaria Escriva that love "is deeds, not words."

Women volunteers gave lessons on cooking, sewing, flower arrangement and even English.

Not owned by Opus Dei

From there, Punlaan moved to West Triangle. In 1975, the Foundation for Professional Training Inc. (FPTI), composed mostly of Opus Dei members, bought a two-story maternity clinic on M. Paterno Street in San Juan, and made it the Punlaan School.

Today, the Punlaan exudes quiet elegance, from its wooden floors, solid doors, hand-painted stairways with elaborate carvings, to the wrought-iron chandeliers and solid-wood pews in the chapel.

PUNLAAN CENTER in San Juan helps trains young women for hotel and restaurant work. CERES DOYO

Filmer stressed that the school is not owned by the Prelature of Opus Dei, but a "corporate apostolate initiated by members and cooperators with the spiritual formation being entrusted to Opus Dei."

"We are committed to find better ways of helping underprivileged young women achieve intellectual and cultural excellence and acquire mastery of skills through a program based on Christian ideals. The goal is simple: To help them uplift their status and live a life in keeping with their human dignity," Filmer said.

Punlaan is just one of about 40 centers and corporate apostolic undertakings by Opus Dei members and associates since the '60s. These initiatives connect Opus Dei to the less privileged in society.

School for boys

In Barangay Talon, Tuy, Batangas, there's a 10-hectare farm where teenage boys learn modern intercropping techniques and scientific breeding of butterflies. It also offers product marketing, bookkeeping, basic hygiene, table manners, and reflections on the teachings of Opus Dei.

Called the Talon Family Farm School, this unique learning institution is one of seven family farm schools established by the Pampamilyang Paaralang Agrikultura Inc. (PPAI), a non-stock, nonprofit foundation composed mostly of Opus Dei members.

But the scholars and beneficiaries of the family farm schools are rural folk, whether landowners or tenants, who may or may not become members of Opus Dei, according to school director Jose San Juan, an Opus Dei supernumerary.

"The goal is to teach students how to make their own farms productive, improve the living standards of their families, contribute to rural development, always guided by Christian values," San Juan said.

They are exactly like the guiding lights of Punlaan.

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INVITATION TO A PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE AND SEALED BIDDING

Interested parties are hereby invited to a **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** and **SEALED BIDDING** for the installation of a **FIBER OPTIC BACKBONE SYSTEM** for BENECO.

The **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** will be held on **May 25, 2006 at 10:00A.M.** at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound, Utility Road, Baguio City where the scopes of work will be discussed.

Prospective bidders must submit their Company Profile; Income Tax Returns and Audited Financial Statements for the past three (3) years; Business Permit; Track Record; Company Registration Certificate and List of Customers.

SEALED BIDS must be received on or before **June 6, 2006 at 10:00A.M.** at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound, Utility Road, Baguio City, **OPENING OF BIDS** will be on the same date, time and venue.

Only those who were present during the Pre-Qualification Conference and who submitted the above-enumerated requirements will be allowed during the Bidding Proper.

BENECO reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid most advantageous to the BENECO.

THE PBAC

(PDI – May 15 & 19, 2006)

'Secular mentality but following Church agenda'

From page A1

The head of the Philippine vicariate is Fr. Jose Duran while the overall head of the entire prelature is Bishop Javier Echevarria (Pope John Paul II made Opus Dei a "personal prelature" in 1982 and is the first of its kind in the Catholic Church. Members however defend the Pope's move and say this was very much in line with Vatican II's spirit.)

Opus Dei has been generally perceived to be a powerful, influential, wealthy, conservative and secretive religious institution within the Catholic Church and in secular society. But rarely, until the recent blockbuster "The Da Vinci Code" fiction and film that cast aspersions on Opus Dei and doubts on the divinity of Jesus, has it come out to state publicly what it is and is not.

Opus Dei information officer and numerary Conrado Ma. Ricafort reveals that his office has been receiving a lot of inquiries not only from the media but also from ordinary people eager to know more. The controversy could create a reverse effect.

Intrigued

Such was the case with Armando Capitin, 54, married, who followed columnist Hilarion Henares' tirades against Opus Dei published in the INQUIRER in the 1980s. Intrigued, Capitin decided to find out more. He attended a two-hour recollection at an Opus Dei center in Makati.

"I was attracted because of the spirit of friendship," the former swimming instructor says. Capitin is now a supernumerary while his wife is a cooperator. He works at Dualtech, an Opus Dei-affiliated training center. As required of supernumeraries, he observes the norms, among them daily Mass and regular confession, but he also finds time for an occasional drink with the guys in the neighborhood. Does he get a lot of ribbing? Not really, he says.

"Esto vir." To be a man. Words from Escriva that Capitin and fellow supernumerary Cesar Bautista love to quote. Bautista, 53, used to work in Dualtech and is now connected with Southridge School.

The person next to you could be an Opus Dei member without your knowing it. Although members strictly follow the so-called "norms" such as daily Mass attendance, frequent confessions (weekly at least), prayer and meditation and acts of mortification, they do not wear their affiliation on their lapel.

The numeraries who live at the Tanglaw University Center in Quezon City are mostly career women with day jobs outside the center.

Residence for numeraries

Dr. Lisa Ocampo teaches philosophy at the University of the Philippines while Lorie Ande handles values education at the Philippine Science High School. Jing Gomez works with a nongovernment organization while Vanessa Valencia is the center's director. All are graduates of UP.

When the INQUIRER visited Tanglaw on a Saturday, a demonstration on scuba diving was going on. Some numeraries were at prayer while others were doing house chores or simply relaxing.

Tanglaw

Tanglaw is just one of several residences for numeraries in the Philippines. It is home to about 40 members and like other residences, this one has upper middle-class amenities including an air-conditioned chapel with a gilded altar and an auditorium. Tanglaw is not just a residence though; it is also a venue for seminars for students and professionals. Beside Tanglaw is Habihan, a training center.

Numeraries who live together as a family (they do not call it community) do not keep their earnings, but they could ask for anything they need for "the work," be it a laptop, a cell phone, why, even a car. They do not have a vow of poverty but commit to a life of simplicity.

Regular lives, varied lifestyles

Even numeraries have to live in a way that is on the level of their status in the world. For example, Estanislao lives in a residence for Opus Dei numeraries in posh Dasmariñas Village in Makati and is driven around by a chauffeur.

Not everyone stays in Opus Dei for good. "HP" joined Opus Dei as a numerary when he was 20 and a college senior at De La Salle University. He left after 16 years and is now married.

"I owe to Opus Dei my continued appreciation of my Catholic faith," he tells the INQUIRER. "It gave me an opportunity to find meaning in ordinary work as a viable and attainable path toward spiritual growth."

Why did he leave? "I guess at some point in my life I could not keep up with the daily struggle to live a life of prayer," HP confesses. "Put another way, I did not respond to the grace of God as I had done in the past."

Supernumeraries live more regular lives and have varied lifestyles. One could be a taxi driver or a professor, a chef or a columnist like INQUIRER's Belinda O. Cunanan.

Writer and editor Monina Allarey Mercado, like her late husband, advertising executive Antonio Mercado, is a supernumerary.

"Being in Opus Dei," Mercado says, "is not about joining a group but about coming face to face with God." She joins a weekly circle of 12 for study and reflection. Opus Dei, she says, is solidly based on theology, doctrine and the scriptures.

"There is something warm and human about the founder," she says. But she also admits that there is a certain kind of intellectuality in the Opus Dei. She recalls what the founder once said. "How do you catch souls? Like fish, by the head."

Intellectuals

Estanislao himself says that numeraries should at least have the intellect of one who could pursue a master's degree or a doctorate. Many of them do.

Cambridge and Harvard-educated economist and business writer Jose Romero, a supernumerary of "el opus" or "la obra" for 35 years, recalls his early encounters with Estanislao's group.

"I was impressed by their commitment to their profession. They even helped me with my research," he laughs.

When he found himself at the crossroads at some point, he decided to take the high road and joined Opus Dei that he now considers as his "spiritual gasoline." Romero is involved in development foundations for the poor.

But supernumeraries are not always from the upper crust of society.

Those of humble means who might not have had higher education but who heard the call to "the work" have responded generously. But little is known about them, while those who move in lofty places are often viewed with suspicion. What might be their agenda?

Thrust into the open

Author and Vatican journalist John Allen writes that there's an Opus Dei of myth and an Opus Dei of reality. "The myth," he says, "concerns an occult, ultra-wealthy and ultra-powerful force metastasizing at the heart of Roman Catholicism, harboring dark secrets and exercising vast unseen influence."

But Dan Brown, author of the potboiler "The Da Vinci Code," didn't invent this profile, Allen says. The group had already acquired it decades ago. There had to be reasons.

Now suddenly thrust into the scene via a wild plot of a novel and film, Opus Dei is facing what looks like a perfect moment to open itself more fully, rid itself of ghosts past, and beckon, as Jesus did to those who doubted, "Come and see."

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Section I.
Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
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(Reference No.: PB060322-EL0036)

1. The *National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO)* through the *CY2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board*, intends to apply the sum of *Php 4,940,700.00* being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply and Delivery of Control Cables**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *Control Cables*. Delivery of the GOODS is required *within sixty (60) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order*. The Description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine resposiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, starting **May 19, 2006 to June 21, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.** at the address below and upon payment of a non refundable fee in the amount of *One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00)*. The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **June 7, 2006 at 2:00 P.M.** at same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **2:00 P.M. of June 22, 2006**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	Php 49,407.00
2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	Php 74,110.50
3. Surety bond (2.5% of ABC)	Php 123,517.50
4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC)	Php 4,940,700.00

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bid opening shall be on June 22, 2006 / 2:00 P.M. at the *Admin Conference Rm. same address below*. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – May 19 & 26, 2006)

Name of the Procuring Entity *Local Government Unit of Claveria*
Project Reference Number
Name of Project: *Claveria WAHIG System*
Location of Project: *Claveria, Mis. Or.*

Standard Form Number : SF-CONS-04
Revised on: 9 May 04
Standard Form Title INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Local Government Unit of Claveria through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites consultants to apply for eligibility and shortlisting and if found eligible and shortlisted, to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Claveria WAHIG System
Brief Description	The proposed Claveria Wahig System will provide sufficient, safe and potable level III Water Supply System to 12 priority barangays and bulk supply of water at Barangay Poblacion. The project's major components include the development of intake structure, treatment facilities, a control room with related structures, installation of 44.45 km transmission facilities, installation of 43.53 distribution facilities, construction of 12 storage facilities, provision on metered connections, fire hydrants, valves fitting and other related appurtenances
Approved Budget	4 Million
For the Contract	Design and Construction Supervision of Claveria WAHIG System
Source of Funding	20% LDF/Gen. Fund
Contract Duration	Detailed Engineering Design = 60 days Construction Supervision = until the completion of project

The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Form. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Shortlisting of eligible consultants will be done on the following criteria: experience of the consultant relative to proposed project, qualification of personnel and current workload. Not more than five (5) eligible bidders shall make up the short-list. The bid evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be **Quality Based Evaluation** with the following consideration and its corresponding weight percentage, to wit:

a	Quality of pesonnel	30%
b	Experience and capability	45%
c	Plan of approach and Methodology	25%
		100%

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, bid Security, performance Security, Pre-Bidding conference(s), Evaluation of bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Activities	Schedule
1. Deadline for submission of letter of intent and application for Eligibility	May 26, 2006
2. Issuance of eligibility Forms	May 26 - June 2
3. Deadline for the Submission of eligibility Requirements	June 2
4. Eligibility Checking	June 5
5. Results of Eligibility Check	June 13
6. Results of shortlisting	June 13
7. Pre-Bid conference	June 20
8. Issuance of Bid Documents	July 4 - 14
9. Deadline and Opening of Bids	July 17

The Eligibility Screening Form will be available at BAC Secretariat, located at Municipal Engineer's Office upon submission of a letter of intent and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Three Thousand Pesos (P 3,000.00) for Eligibility forms to the Local Government Unit of Claveria. Submission and results of eligibility shall be in the same office. Bid Documents will be available only to shortlisted bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount P 20,000.00 to the Local Government Unit of Claveria. The Local Government Unit of Claveria assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) JOHN REY A. TOMINES
BAC Chairman

(PDI – May 12 & 19, 2006)

Leftist activist abducted, but cops doubt report

By Luige A. del Puerto and Tarra V. Quismundo

YET ANOTHER POLITICAL activist has been abducted, this time in Makati City, or was he?

Party-list group Bayan Muna claimed yesterday that one of its members, Rolando Ralla Porter, a veteran of the First Quarter Storm, was snatched by three men in Barangay Olympia around noon Tuesday.

"Three unidentified men grabbed Roland then dragged (him into) an L300-type van with Plate No. WAA-201," said Bayan Muna deputy secretary general Roberto de Castro in a text message to the INQUIRER.

Bayan Muna was quick to blame the abduction on "death squads" of the government.

"GMA's (President Macapagal-Arroyo) death squad (is) now operating in Manila," said De Castro, adding that Porter was the 148th victim of forced disappearances since 2001 and the 15th this year.

Surprised about news of the abduction, Makati City police chief Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio yesterday ordered investigators to check the report.

"There was no report of that here... negative. I have asked our operatives to verify the report. I just got the information through texts from the media," Valerio told the INQUIRER.

Porter's disappearance follows the latest rash of killings of activists this month which prompted the Philippine National Police to form Task Force Usig.

Porter's half brother, Mario Bravo, reported the incident to barangay authorities. It was another brother who informed him about the abduction after learning about it from Porter's colleagues, Bravo said.

"I tried contacting him through his cell phone that night when I heard about it, but I could no longer reach him. His phone was out of service," Bravo said.

Bravo said as far as he knew, Porter, who is in his 50s and lives in Barangay Olympia, was active in Bayan Muna.

The First Quarter Storm was the series of massive violent demonstrations mounted by militant students and other activists against President Ferdinand Marcos in the early '70s.

Porter had a stroke several years ago and is semi-paralyzed. "He cannot run," Bravo said.

Quoting a witness, Bravo said his brother was buying a cell phone "load" when someone on a motorcycle gave a signal apparently to let his cohorts know their target had arrived.

"They just threw him into the van and fled," he said, quoting the witness. A bystander reportedly tried to pursue the van but was waved away.

"They were in civilian clothes. They said they were cops," Bravo said.

If Porter was abducted by police or military elements, De Castro said the lack of an incident report did not surprise him.

"Those units tasked to conduct abductions and assassinations are secret units of police and military agents. They are compartmentalized and faceless. They don't usually coordinate with local police since their operations are special that leave no traces but fear and terror, both during and after their operations," De Castro said in a text message.

Ceasefire in Sulu

THE MILITARY HAS DECLARED A UNILATERAL ceasefire in Sulu in deference to the visit of representatives from the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said: "The Armed Forces of the Philippines has informed my office of the suspension of military operations in the province of Sulu from May 18 to 20 for the duration of the visit of an OIC fact finding team."

The high-level OIC mission arrived on May 16 to look into the progress of the implementation of the 1996 ceasefire agreement between the Philippine government and former Moro rebels.

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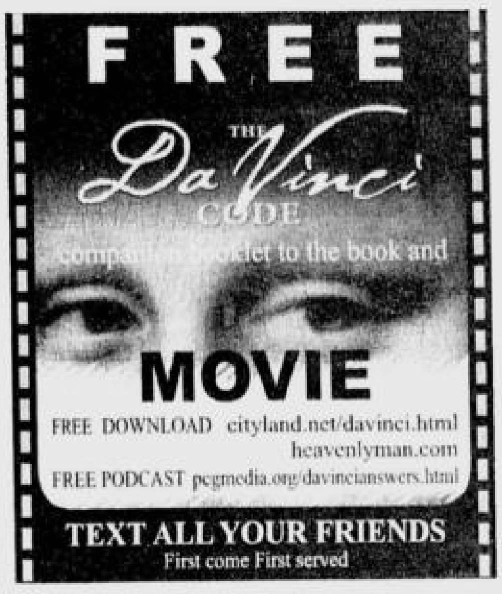
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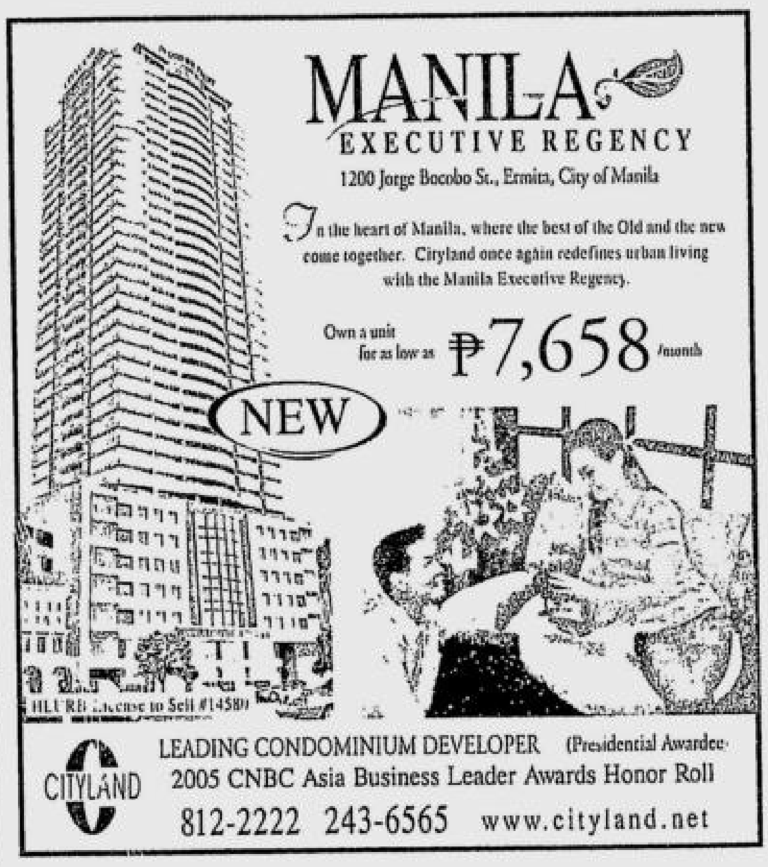
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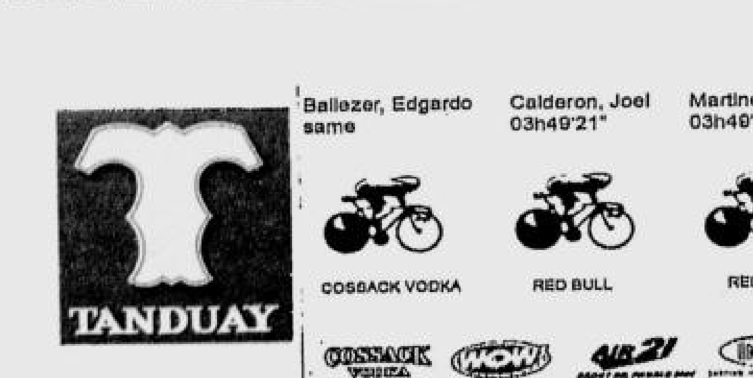
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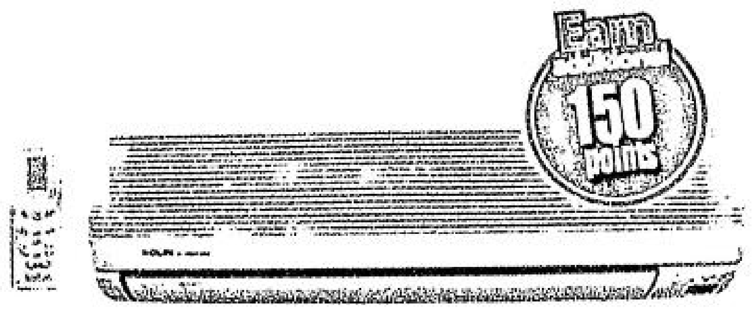
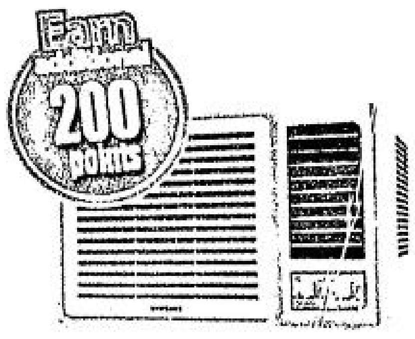
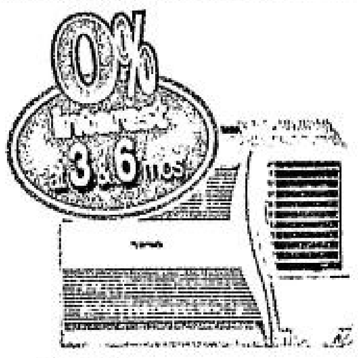


KOLIN
KS610B1
- 840 watts
- EER: 11.5



SAMSUNG
AW07P1HBA
- .75 hp
- Silver nano filter & evaporator
- No rust fins



Panasonic
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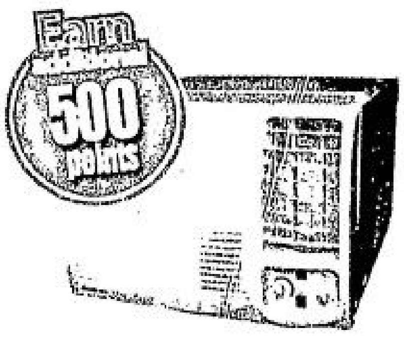
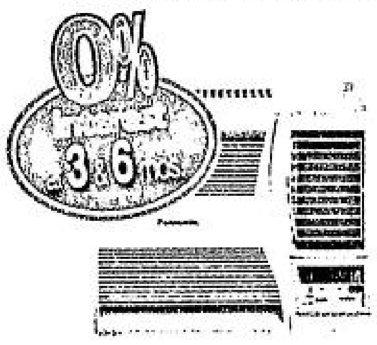
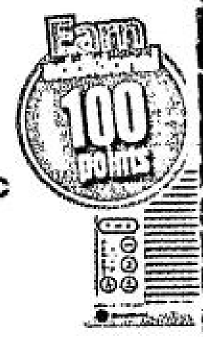
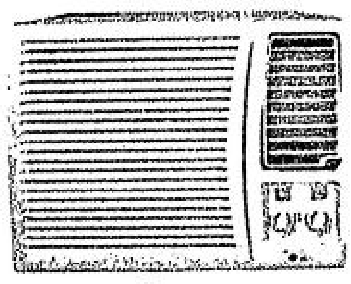


CONDURA
WCONSD10EC
- Window type 1.25 hp
- With energy saving plug saves up to 40% in electrical consumption

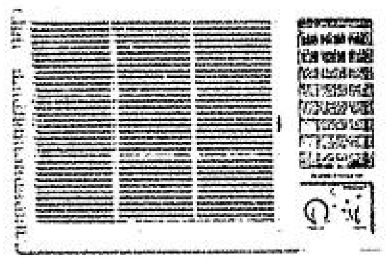


Panasonic
CWC52JPH
- .5 hp w/ timer
- 12 hr On/Off timer

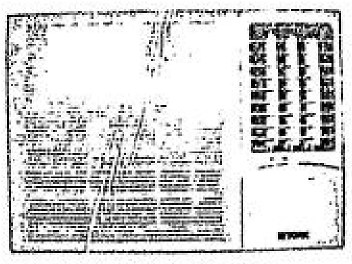




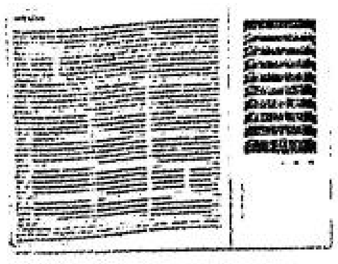
LG LA100MG
- 1 hp



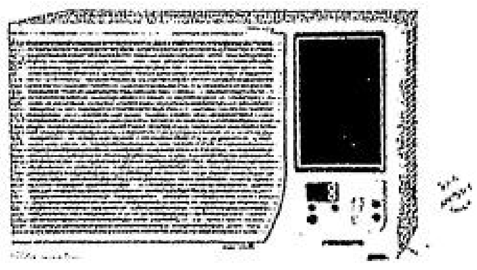
Kelvinator WKELH006EA
- Window type .5 hp
- Compact size
- Easy to operate manual controls



YORK Y9USC09-6A
- 1 hp manual
- Energy efficient
- Anti-rust technology
- Exceptionally silent



HITACHI RA10MA
- Anti bacterial filter
- High cooling capacity
- Blue fins evaporator



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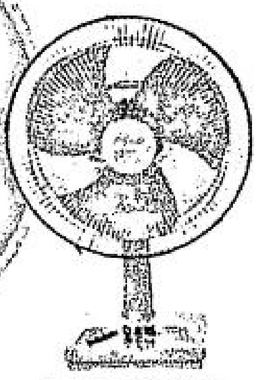
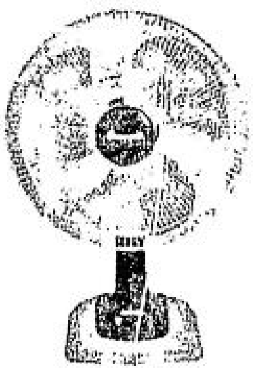
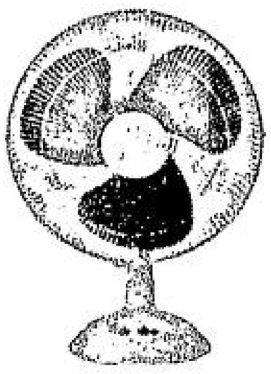


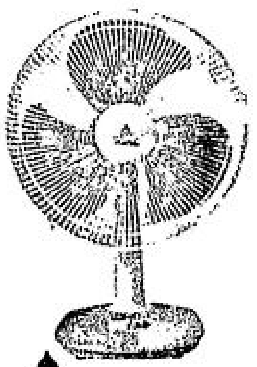
MITSUBOSHI
MD-1618
- 16" Desk Fan



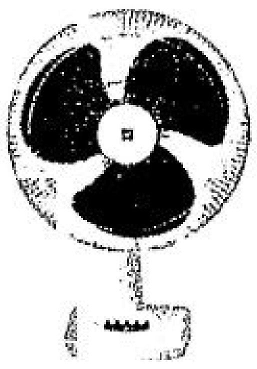
Dowell
TF-416
Desk Fan



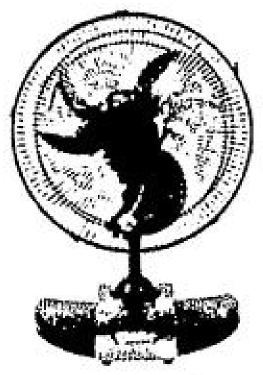
UNION
AMD-16
- 16" Desk Fan



HANABISHI The Space
- 16" Desk fan



KDK D40Y-G/B
- 16" Deskfan



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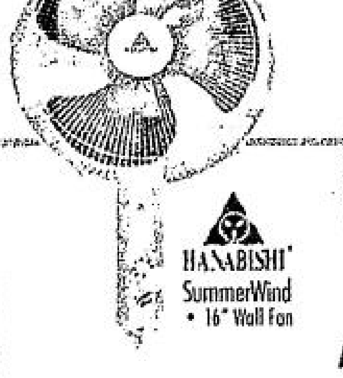
- 16" Industrial Floor fan



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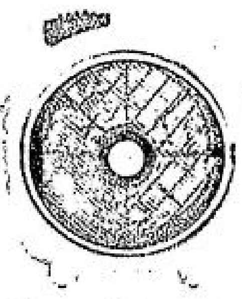
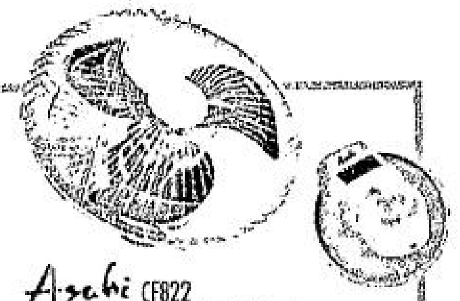
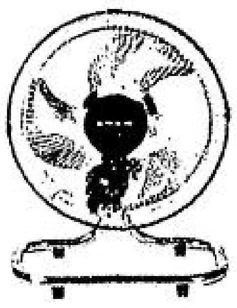
- 16" Wall Fan



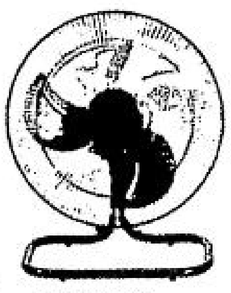
Dowell BK-141FC
Box fan



Asahi CF822
- 18" Metal Ceiling Fan



MITSUBOSHI
MGO-236
- 12" Chrome Industrial Fan



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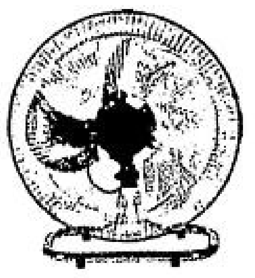
U5G16MB
- 16" Industrial Floor fan



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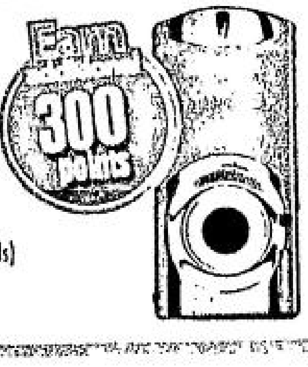

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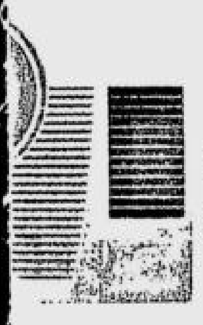
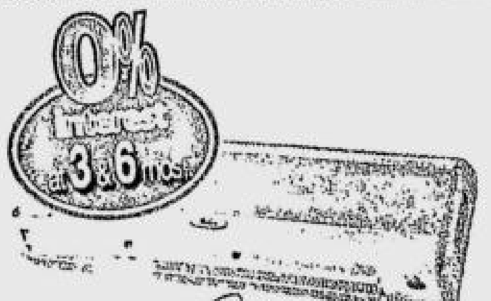


AJIAC18GKQ
- 2 hp window type



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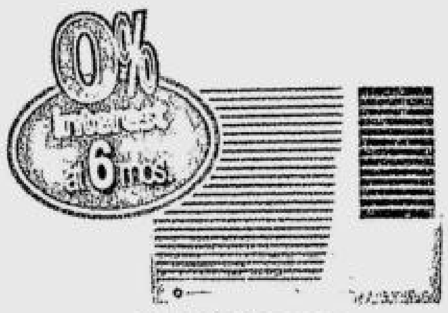
- Airflow direction control



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SANYO SA96P
- 1 hp
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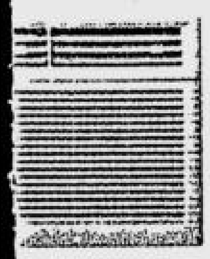
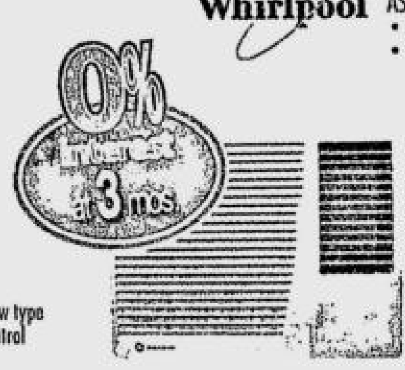


AEV09KB
- 1 hp window type
- Manual control



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Shinco
KC35A
- 1.5 hp window type
- Quiet run
- Powerful Dehumidification

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WCARF010EA
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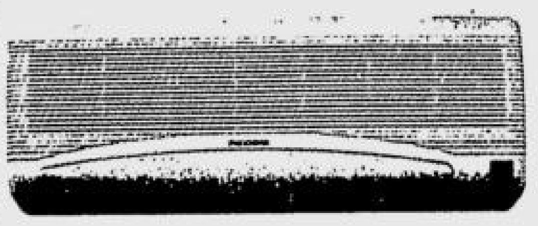
- 720 watts



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1FE1009N7F
- Wireless remote control
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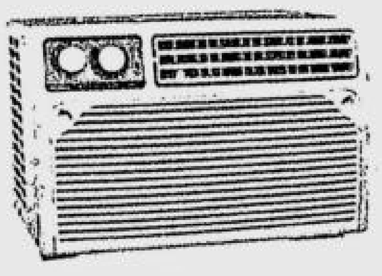

GREE KC15P
- .6 hp window air-type
- 4-way airflow
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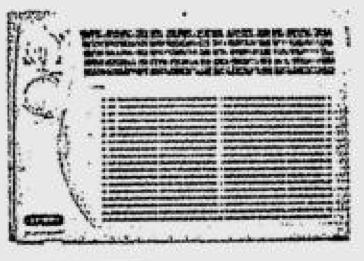
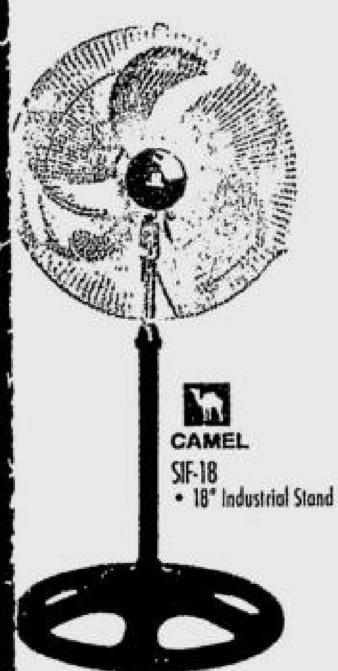
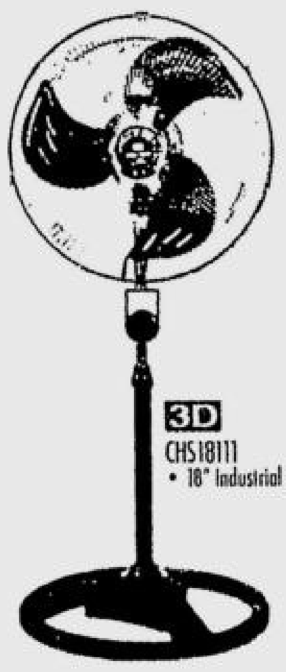


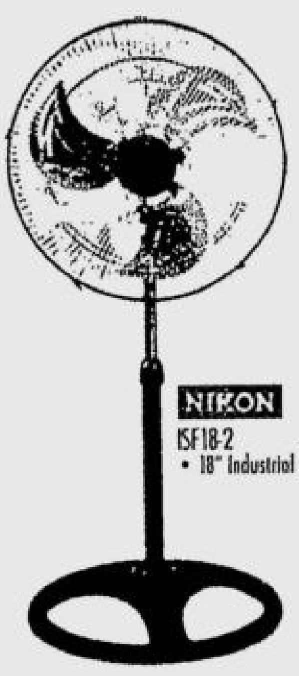
koppel 1KYX06N7A-PH
- Manual control
- Rust resistant
- Easy to clean washable filter



CAMEL
SIF-18
- 18" Industrial Stand fan



3D
CHS18111
- 18" Industrial Stand fan



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ISF18-2
- 18" Industrial fan

PROMAC
Ultrafan
- 16" Industrial Stand Fan

SS45
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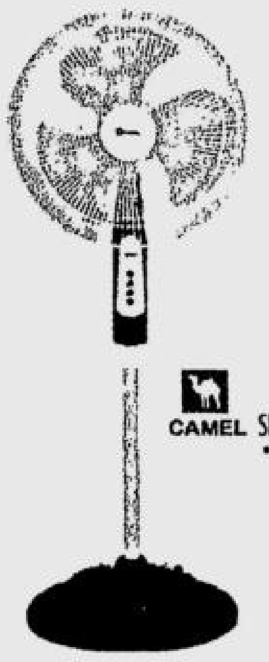

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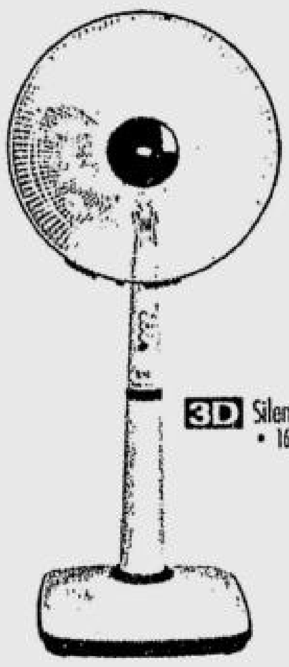
- 16" Stand fan



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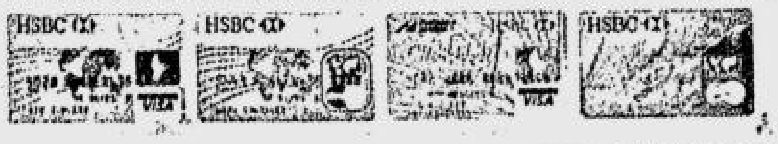

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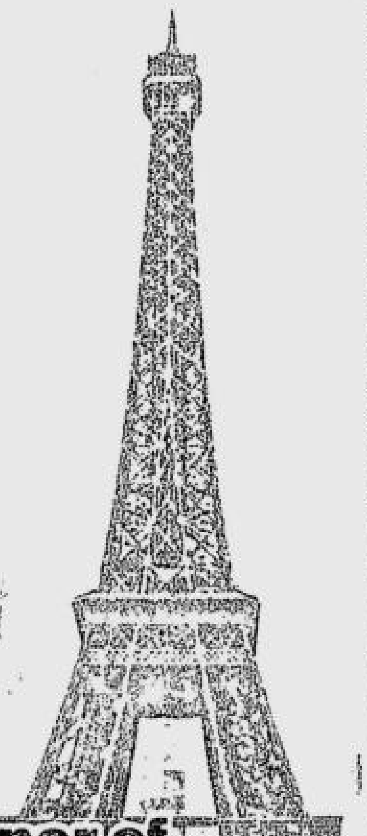

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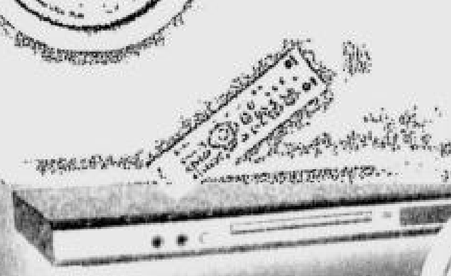

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OPINION

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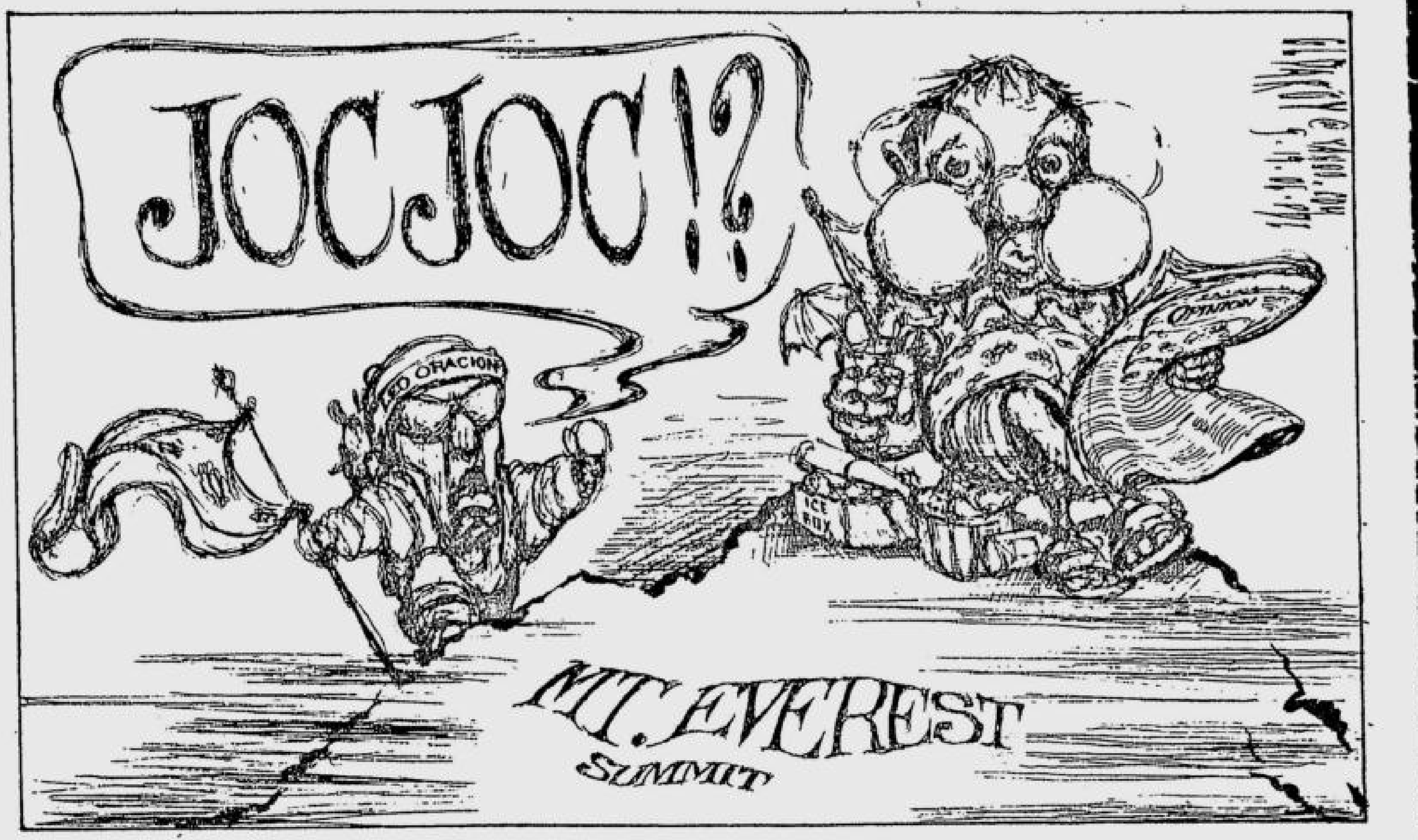


Judicial statesmanship

EDITORIAL

WHEN CHIEF JUSTICE ARTEMIO PANGANIBAN made his speech before the Georgetown Law Center, he was not only addressing a body of lawyers, he was speaking to an institution of higher learning that has taken an interest in the Philippines for several generations. Since 1937, Philippine presidents have received degrees honoris causa from Georgetown, and President Macapagal-Arroyo considers herself to be something of an alumna of the institution.

The Chief Justice was also speaking to an audience whose familiarity with the status of the law in our country has been defined by The New York Times editorial that came out earlier this year and warned of the dangers of creeping authoritarianism. It was this disturbing development that Panganiban directly confronted in his speech. His remarks validated the opinion held both here and abroad, that the executive department has made attempts to assert and wield powers that are contrary to basic liberties and democracy.

Panganiban said that under his watch, the Supreme Court has managed to "safeguard the liberty of our people and to nurture their prosperity, while upholding the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary." He pointed out that the court's recent rulings on Executive Order 464, the Calibrated Preemptive Response and Proclamation 1017 are "landmark" rulings, which serve to uphold "the primacy of civil liberties over governmental actions."

His message was clear, unambiguous, and, we might add, necessary: Political and civil rights are not expendable, period—and certainly not in the name of progress. Panganiban said what many have said before (including former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. in his fact-finding commission's report on coups) and which should be said again and again: "Filipinos may endure occasional hunger, but they will never tolerate injustice and indignity for long."

As Panganiban eloquently put it, "Liberty becomes the guarantee that, free from all interference and suppression, we all can conceive of the good life and act according to those conceptions. I venture the proposition that a society marked by such liberty is prosperous." Liberty and prosperity must go hand in hand. They reinforce and compliment—even protect—each other, and without one, the other is impossible, or only an approximation of what could be.

For the American audience listening to Panganiban's speech, his words were comforting. For Filipinos at home hearing about his remarks, it is reassuring to know that the world is being told that indeed, as Panganiban optimistically titled one of his recent books, the country may be undergoing a "judicial renaissance." If the Davide Court was primarily interested in instituting efficiency and accomplishing a modernization of the judiciary, the Panganiban Court may yet go down in history as one dedicated to re-consecrating the judiciary to its historic role as defender of the people's liberties.

But saying what he said, did more than just reassure audiences abroad and here. Statements of an official nature serve to raise the bar for conduct. It would be difficult, for the remainder of the Chief Justice's term, for either he or his colleagues to issue rulings that are inferior to what they have already penned. This is the essence of statesmanship: to raise the bar, and put forward a degree of dedication and even performance that exceeds expectations.

Like all the major institutions of our country, the Supreme Court has been subjected to an erosion of prestige and confidence among the public. To a certain extent, confidence has been restored. We hope that the Chief Justice knows that he has only begun to make his mark. A challenge to the Supreme Court remains. It must not only issue rulings that firmly defend the people's rights. It must also now set about issuing rulings in a timely manner, so that together with a vigorous defense of the public good comes an effective bar to officials abusing the law. Because those whose wrists the courts have slapped are still claiming that it was worth it, since they accomplished what they wanted to do, regardless of their eventually having been judged to have acted illegally.

A 1-2-3 in Masinloc power plant deal?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LAST WEEK, THE NEWSPAPERS CAME OUT with the news that a Malaysian firm, Ranhill Power Berhad, came to the rescue of financially strapped YNN Pacific Consortium that had won the bidding for the coal-fired Masinloc power plant of the National Power Corp. The 600-MW plant is the largest ever to be sold in Napocor's privatization efforts. The YNN Consortium won the bidding with what some critics call "an obscenely high" bid of $562 million, well above the reserve price set by the government, and almost double the bid of First Gen. Corp. amounting to $275 million. So officials of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), the government agency in charge of the sales, were ecstatic. They were seeing plenty of dollar signs in the clouds.

But it turned out to be a mirage. And the recent rescue by Ranhill has a catch.

The bid conditions require the winning bidder to pay up-front 40 percent of the bid price (in the case of YNN $222 million out of its $562 million bid) 270 days after the countdown, plus an $11-million performance bond as a guarantee that YNN would pay the purchase price. But two-and-a-half years later, YNN has not yet paid even the down payment. Under the terms of the bidding, PSALM can already foreclose the $11-million performance bond, but it refuses to do that because of greed.

Greed is what makes victims easy prey to swindlers. Victims of pyramid scams, double-your-money and *ginto-sa-gusi* and similar scams are bilked because they are tempted by plenty of easy money promised by the swindlers. Something similar is happening in the stalled Masinloc plant sale.

Although early on, doubts were raised about the financial capability of the winning bidders (Sen. Joker Arroyo publicly questioned the credibility of YNN whose offices, he claimed, were in an address in Binondo that turned out to be leased to a janitorial service), PSALM was hypnotized by the unusually high bid price.

After several days of the controversy, an Australian company, Great Pacific Financial Corp., surfaced suddenly as the main financial backer of the YNN consortium. The "Sunset Date" was set for Dec. 2, 2005.

As the date approached, however, reports came out in the press that for some undisclosed reasons, the Australian partner was dropping out. Manila's business circles were abuzz with rumors about how YNN's owner was going around town peddling, for a handsome fee, 100 percent of the consortium's interest in the plant that it did not yet own.

When Dec. 2 arrived, YNN couldn't produce the cash. Its Australian backer was also nowhere to be found. Instead of foreclosing YNN's $11-million bond, PSALM mysteriously granted it another three-month reprieve to pay the $222-million down payment or until March 31, 2006.

There is no basis under the bid documents or under the law for the grant of the extension, but the action would seem justified because the purchase price was simply too good to pass up. Greed! Against the purchase price of $562 million, the forfeiture of YNN's $11.2-million performance bond seemed too puny a consolation.

On March 31, 2006, the already-extended deadline, YNN still could not come up with the money. PSALM again gave it a 90-day extension, or until the end of June 2006.

To sweeten the pot, YNN offered a $3 million increase in the performance bond, which PSALM, because of greed again, accepted.

This time, it was reported that the Malaysian company, Ranhill Berhad, had taken over the Australians' share in the consortium. Ranhill would be the white knight that would shell out the $14.2-million performance bond and the $222 million up-front payment that would seal the deal.

Ranhill's takeover from Great Pacific is not sanctioned by PSALM's own bidding rules. A potential purchaser's financial capability and track record must be screened and proven to be impeccable by the bid documents at, or prior to, the bidding. But PSALM turned a blind eye to these violations.

Soon enough the trick surfaced. On April 28, 2006, the newspapers reported that Ranhill had deposited the $14.2-million performance bond. But it turned out that Ranhill's entry into the fray was not as straightforward as it appeared. Ranhill had slipped in as a condition to the effectivity of (and not merely as a condition to drawing on) the bond that Masinloc first be assured of a supply contract with Meralco.

Meralco has nothing to do with it. It is a totally different and independent entity. Does Ranhill expect the government to force Meralco to sign a supply contract with YNN? Considering the horrendously high price YNN is obliged to pay for Masinloc, the resulting high-priced contract will result in horrendously high power rates for consumers.

Ranhill's condition changes the terms of Masinloc's auction. Masinloc was bidded out as a merchant plant and a valid performance bond was necessary regardless of whether someone was guaranteed or not to buy Masinloc's power. A supply contract with Meralco changes the basic assumptions of the bidding. Had Masinloc been bidded out with a supply contract, certainly other bidders would have submitted higher bids.

The trick has become evident. YNN boxed out its competitors with a very high bid price and now it is changing the terms of the auction.

Pinoy int'l peacekeepers as milking cows

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

HOW DISAPPOINTING TO READ THAT THE Armed Forces now wants to take a 40-percent cut from the pay of Filipino soldiers who serve as UN peacekeepers abroad! The Pinoy soldier has been conned and bilked dry while he risks life and limb in his own land. I had thought that, finally, under the watchful eye of international auditors, the Pinoy soldier serving abroad would get his due. How naïve it was to think that he could free himself from the clutches of local rent-seekers.

This phenomenon of international peacekeepers is of recent vintage, though the rules have been in place since 1945 when the United Nations was created. The UN largely operates through moral suasion and consent-based sanctions, except for the Security Council which can enforce its decisions "to maintain or restore international peace and security." When the Council takes "Chapter VII action" under the UN Charter, it calls on UN member states to contribute their troops to "enforcement action." However, except for occasional successes like in the 1957 Suez Crisis, that clause was effectively shelved during the Cold War, since both the United States and the Soviet Union held veto powers in the Council.

That all changed with the Kremlin's demise, and the full meaning of Chapter VII sprang onto the public eye in a big way in the famous 1991 Operation Desert Storm against Saddam Hussein, when American Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf led multinational troops in the "liberation" of Kuwait. Closer to home, the UN has also sent its "blue helmets" to Cambodia and to East Timor—and Filipino soldiers were there. Today, they are deployed to various hot spots: Haiti, Liberia, the Sudan (the list includes a solitary Filipino in Afghanistan!).

I was happy for these Filipino enlisted men. Finally, a chance to work and get paid professionally, to stand shoulder to shoulder with foreign troops, and to receive a UN services medal, another feather in the careers of proud warriors.

I had assumed all the while that the Filipino soldier was paid as much as his foreign counterparts (they reportedly get some $1,000 per month). Each country is free to give additional pay to its own soldiers. Understandably, though courage knows no nationality, the additional pay to the "soldier who shall have borne the battle, and [to] his widow and his orphan" depends on the wealth and poverty of nations.

That is why I am dismayed at the AFP's unilateral decision to shave off a hefty percentage from the soldiers' allowances. (I recall reading somewhere that in the 1970s, Chairman Mao's government used to collect the pay of Chinese international civil servants, and then merely allocated to them a politically correct allowance. I understand that the Chinese state still has a share of Yao Ming's NBA paycheck.)

The AFP reportedly justifies its 40 percent cut as reimbursement for the cost of training and preparation. (The PNP contingent is beyond the reach of the AFP and their fees are intact.) After all, the Pinoy blue helmets do not emerge spontaneously in the UN camps, "beamed" out there a la Star Trek. Certainly they were trained in Philippine barracks, by Filipino officers, and vetted by a staff of administrators. There is a cost to all that and, with creative accounting, enough to justify the 40 percent take. Any bureaucrat can manufacture the numbers to support that claim and fix the books to upload all costs as "training and preparation." (Significantly, what the AFP "invests" up-front is fixed, yet what it collects from the soldier is open-ended and can extend long after the "investment" had been recovered. Now if only that God-given creativity was put to blessed purposes ... Tsk, tsk.)

It is not the reckoning of the cost alone that is debatable, but also its allocation. To shift that cost to the soldier is unfair. Why should he subsidize the Philippine government's contribution to the UN Security Council? All taxpayers contribute to that subsidy. In effect, the 40-percent levy concentrates the burden on the peacekeeper himself, on top of the burden that all soldiers are sworn to bear and from which ordinary taxpayers are spared, namely, the risk of dying in the line of duty.

It is high time that this matter be put in order. The Philippine economy will continue to rely on foreign remittances for a while, and the Filipino soldier and his family can surely use the occasional legitimate windfall from UN peacekeeping service. At the same time, UN blue helmet operations seem on the rise and will flourish in the coming years, as the global community flexes its muscle and realizes that, today, the real battle is against abusive local powers, whether they are genocidal maniacs, bloodthirsty warlords, or parasitical elites. Filipino blue helmets speak well of our nation's commitment to humanitarian goals.

First, the Filipino peacekeepers must be selected in merit-based, competitive processes, free from the clutches of *padrinos*. None of those last-minute additions to the list, they who jump the queue and bypass worthy comrades. None, I hope, of those returning soldiers reportedly caught in attempted smuggling who stain the record of those who have served honorably.

Second, the Filipino peacekeeper must receive his pay without illicit deductions on whatever excuse. These fee arrangements are fixed by formal agreements among sovereigns, and cannot—to borrow the words of the Supreme Court in its PP 1017 decision—be "trifled with," the way this government does willy-nilly with the Philippine Constitution.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Leftists' purge and death squads

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE MURDER LAST WEEK OF MANUEL NARDO, coordinator of Bayan Muna, brought to 123 the number of leftist activists killed since 2001, of which 93 were Bayan Muna members. It also elevated the profile of what appears to be a revival of the anti-communist witch-hunt which swept the country in the 1950s and 1970s.

The murder sparked accusations from the military that the latest wave of killings is part of the internal "cleansing" within the Communist Party. But the Left blamed the killings on government security forces.

Whoever is responsible, the number of Left-wing militants killed during the past five years is staggering. It stretches belief that all 123 were killed by fellow-leftists, even if we assume that there has been a continuing internal purge in the Communist Party since the 1980s, when scores of them were exterminated in their "killing fields," mainly in Davao, at the height of their factional power struggle.

In the history of the communist insurgency in this country, there has not been so many communists killed since the height of the Huk rebellion in the 1950s and the anti-communist campaign of President Marcos in the 1970s against the New People's Army. Most of the casualties then came from encounters between the NPA and the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the now defunct Philippine Constabulary. It was a straightforward conflict between the military and the communist guerrillas.

If the claim of the military that the deaths are a result of "internal cleansing" in the party is true, then the communist insurgency has acquired a new dimension, an intensification of the phenomenon where the "revolution devours its own children" in a span of five years, during the Arroyo administration. This is what makes the "internal cleansing" theory hard to believe.

Thus, the question becomes unavoidable: Why is the administration raising the communist bogey at this time, decades after the waning of the threat of a communist revolution? Another question: Is the regime reviving the communist specter as a formula for political survival and for consolidating its fragile support in the Armed Forces, where the anti-communist tradition is deep-seated?

Until these questions are answered, there is one undeniable fact: The killings have escalated against the background of heightened harassment of the parliamentary stream of the Left. The attack on the Left is focused on Bayan Muna, which is significant, as we shall see.

The Bayan Muna party-list leaders elected to Congress—Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador together with their colleagues Crispin Beltran, Rafael Mariano and Liza Maza—face rebellion charges alleging that they were part of a Left-Right "conspiracy" that mounted the aborted coup attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo last February. They were charged together with Communist Party leaders Jose Ma. Sison and Luis Jalandoni, and, in an incompatible combination, with former Sen. Gregorio Honasan, ring leader of several coup plots against former President Corazon Aquino. This is an improbable and incendiary ideological mix fabricated by an administration that is desperate for survival.

Ocampo has an explanation for the government's claim that the purges ordered by the Communist Party in the 1980s were continuing. He said, "It will be a propaganda vehicle for the government to blame the Left for the continued killing of activists and exculpate the state security forces that appear circumstantially to be the perpetrators." He said there was a "grand conspiracy" to pin him and other leftist militants in Congress down for the unsolved murders. This was indicated by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's claim that the rebellion cases could open a "Pandora's box" of revelations on the purges of the 1980s, he added.

This means the government has been raking up retrospectively party crimes in the past to back its rebellion complaint, triggered by the alleged "tactical alliance" of the leftist leaders in a "conspiracy" with military officers accused of allegedly plotting the Feb. 24 coup.

No evidence has not been introduced by the government to show in what way the leftist leaders plotted with the military officers, including Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim of the Army Special Action Force. The plot, as revealed by the government, was that Lim and his cohorts would announce their withdrawal of support for the Arroyo administration and then join a civilian rally in Makati to spark a people power uprising.

The government appears to have anchored its claim of a Left-Right "conspiracy" on the presence in the Makati march of Left-wing groups carrying red streamers and slogans demanding the ouster of Ms Arroyo.

The inclusion of the Bayan Muna leaders in the rebellion case marks the first legal action against members of the communist movement (or at least its moderate faction) since they joined the parliamentary stream of Philippine politics by participating in party-list elections for Congress. The effort to link them to the military groups associated with employing extra-constitutional means to change the political leadership therefore interrupts the trend toward weaning the Left away from armed revolution and absorbing it in parliamentary politics.

The fact that most of the victims of the recent killings were Bayan Muna members indicates that the government considers the parliamentary wing of the communist movement to be a threat to regime survival if it coalesced with the military right-wing. From this perspective, the harassment of the party-list representatives is a short-sighted strategy to ensure regime survival.

It also sets back the absorption of the Left into the middle ground of Philippine politics.

Women on death row

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IN THE DAYS BEFORE JOSIE ESPARAS, THE FIRST Filipino woman on death row facing lethal injection, was set to receive the ultimate penalty, she took pains to prepare herself to meet her Maker.

As Rachel Ruelo, superintendent of the Correctional Institute for Women, tells it, Esparas underwent a facial and even had a brand-new uniform sewn, reasoning that she should look her best before crossing the divide. (I think she may also have had the media coverage on her mind!) But as it turns out, then President Joseph Estrada had a change of heart and commuted her sentence, for alleged involvement in drug trafficking, to life imprisonment.

Today, having proven herself an adept gardener, Esparas is kept busy tending to the vegetable plots, and doing such a good job that Ruelo is thinking of putting her in charge.

According to Ruelo, who refers to all the women in the CIW as "my women," there are now 33 women on death row, none of whom are singled out for special treatment and who are free to mingle with the other women prisoners. Indeed, going by the accounts of the authors of "Invisible Realities, Forgotten Voices: The Women on Death Row from a Gender and Right-based Perspective," if anyone could have a choice about where to be incarcerated, the CIW is not such a bad place to be.

Even then, despite the relatively benign environment at the CIW, Ruelo thinks the death penalty still constitutes "cruel and unusual punishment," asking the audience at the book launch "to imagine yourself living day after day just waiting to die." Though President Macapagal-Arroyo has announced that she is commuting all death sentences to life imprisonment, lawyers pointed out that the law restoring the death penalty still exists, so there's still need to continue lobbying for the repeal of the law.

* * *

THE STUDY team behind "Invisible Realities, Forgotten Voices," though, makes clear that debating the politics and wisdom of the death penalty was not part of their mandate. The foremost aim of the study, they said, was to "make visible" the invisible women on death row. "They may be small in number," said Aida Santos, who headed the research team, "but (their being on death row) has a huge impact on them, their families and on society."

"Invisible Realities, Forgotten Voices" is a joint project of the Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights) and the Women's Education, Development Productivity and Research Organization (Wedpro), with funding support from the European Union. Aside from Santos, the rest of the team is composed of Ma. Rosalyn Mesina, Marlea Munez and Nancy Edrinal Parreno.

Of the 28 women on death row whom the research team encountered in mid-2004, only 12 consented to participate in the study, after the team met with them and explained the rationale for the study as well as its limitations, including the fact that participation in the study was no guarantee that their cases would be reviewed. Of the 12 women respondents, four were chosen for more detailed case studies, with the team choosing one convict each for the four most common crimes for which women on death row were convicted: kidnapping for ransom, drug-related offenses, parricide and murder.

* * *

RESEARCH on the four case studies involved multiple in-depth interviews with the women who agreed to tell their stories, as well as interviews with their family members, lawyers and others who could verify/contradict their claims.

Santos said they also went out of their way to review and debate what details they would include in the stories, "because even if we used pseudonyms, certain details could still give them away." She added that they also didn't want to divulge details that could jeopardize the women's appeals, though she admits that at least for the case study she handled (that of Catherine, whose story was recounted in this space earlier) she is personally convinced that Catherine didn't deserve the death penalty.

The women in the study had certain things in common: none of them had previous convictions prior to receiving the death sentence; most were in their most productive years (between 21 and 40 years old) at the time of sentencing (the oldest woman on death row is now 84 years old); most were employed; and half were abused as children, while 8 of the 10 in a domestic relationship said they were being abused by their partners, partners who invariably had a hand in bringing them into conflict with the law.

The women's imprisonment, including facing the death sentence, also invariably punished their "significant others," especially their children. Many said their school-age children had to stop schooling, while the older ones turned to drugs or criminality. Four women with young children said their offspring were staying with "multiple care-givers," that is, they had been parceled out to relatives or left to fend for themselves. "*Palaboy,*" as Santos put it.

* * *

"GENDER-BASED discrimination is manifested in all institutions of society, including legal and judicial systems," say the researchers, noting that this bias "(affects) how women are viewed as subjects of the law."

The study recommends the "reorientation of the criminal justice system" to make it more responsive to gender and human rights concerns. It also calls for the formation of support groups or networks for women on death row (and simply for all women in prison), with the authors noting that the women's movement "seems to have forgotten these women."

We may not think of a woman—wife and mother—when we think about the people on death row, but the reality is that they're there. Are we ready as a society to countenance the execution of a woman? And if not, are we saying that only men deserve lethal injection?

History of mountain climbing in RP

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THE SUCCESSFUL FILIPINO ASCENT TO MT. Everest is something that swells national pride in the same way as when Manny Pacquiao brought down that bragging Mexican. The only difference is that there was no exclusive TV coverage this time, thus watching the two rival networks trying to outdo each other was very entertaining indeed. Then there is the claim by another Filipino who had scaled Everest earlier but didn't get the same attention because he was part of a team and wasn't covered by competing TV stations.

On May 29, 1953, Edmund Hillary and his guide, Tenzing Norgay, made the first successful attempt to scale the roof of the world. There was no satellite feed at the time, so the news was suppressed until June 2 to add spice to the coronation of Elizabeth II.

If you browse through the Internet, you will find the same questions Filipinos ask today: Who made it first? Hillary who headed the expedition naturally claimed to be first, while his guide, who presumably went ahead and pulled the white man up, ought to get the credit. When asked the same question, Tenzing in characteristic Asian politesse answered that they ascended "as a team." Thus, Hillary had to wait till Tenzing's death in 1986 to restate the claim that he was first.

While history books and historians will debate this topic for many years, they miss the point, which is the difference in perspective: East with Tenzing and West with Hillary. The Western mind wants to climb the mountain not just "because it's there" but also to plant the flag up in the summit, to conquer, to claim credit. The Eastern mind sees Everest as part of the universe, something to be scaled, to be known and worshipped. I found a translation of Tenzing's account of that historic climb and was drawn to this part:

"I dug a hole in the snow and put down some small sacrifice, symbolic gifts that I had brought with me that our belief—my wife and I are Buddhists—demands. Preferably I wanted to sacrifice my clothes and equipment, but now that was not possible. Instead I left a few biscuits, some chocolates, and a blue pen. The blue pen had just a little piece left that my youngest daughter Nima had sent with me to sacrifice. It was a greeting from my family. Nima had earnestly asked me to put the pen on the summit of Mt. Everest. It was quite an ordinary pen, but one of my daughter's dearest things."

This paragraph alone, compared with Hillary's boasting, says a lot about the difference in cultures, the difference in perspective.

It is not well known that Tenzing's daughter Nima lived in the Philippines. Like her famous father, she was an accomplished mountain climber herself, scaling heights in her teens, yet when love called, she married the least athletic of persons in the late graphic artist and book designer Noli Galang. When she got married, her father was not around to give her hand to her Filipino husband so that role was taken by Prince Peter of Greece. That nobody in the TV newsrooms knew this bit of information is a sad commentary on how little background research is being done in television news.

While it was interesting to hear the rather emotional and naïve remarks of the relatives of the Filipino who climbed Everest, it would have added more perspective to get a sound byte from the daughter of Tenzing who not only married a Filipino but who knew Everest first-hand. What illumination will you get when reporters ask the parents and relatives back home what they think or feel about their now famous son climbing Everest?

Perhaps people should have tracked down Nima Tenzing-Galang or her children and asked about her humble blue pen that now rests in the bosom of Everest, a sacrificial gift given in 1953. Perhaps the TV reporters shivering on the foothills of Everest should ask what the Filipinos left on the roof of the world aside from our flag? If a Filipino could leave a gift on Everest, what would it be?

When the history of mountain climbing in the Philippines is written, there is a mine of late 19th-century materials to be read. Jose Rizal grew up literally under the shadow of Makiling, which could be seen from the back window of their Calamba home. It is said that in 1887, he climbed this mountain and even raced up with his Spanish bodyguard Jose Taviel de Andrade. There was even a rumor circulating that when he reached the summit, Rizal planted the flag of Germany there. This was a time when people referred to him as "Dr. Uliman," which was basically "Aleman" (German) mispronounced and believed to be a Muslim name. Because of this ascent to Makiling, the Spanish authorities had to make discreet inquiries to determine whether Rizal was a German spy. If he was a German citizen, then he did not fall under Spanish jurisdiction.

There were so many absurd stories about Rizal even in his lifetime. And all this is magnified since he is a national hero who may be physically dead but alive in legend.

Rizal read "Reisen in den Philippinen" by Fedor Jagor, first published in Berlin in 1873. The book gives a first-hand account of the ascent to Iriga in Bicol.

Oh, so many unrelated bits of information ready for a future history of Philippine mountain climbing.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Side effects

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNUAL FAMILY PLANNING SURveys are becoming almost too predictable.

The latest survey, conducted in 2005 among 50,000 households and released early this week, shows the CPR to be 49.3 percent. "CPR" here isn't cardio-pulmonary resuscitation or the Arroyo administration's calibrated preemptive response, but contraceptive prevalence rate, a fancy term for family planning usage. The National Statistics Office (NSO), which is responsible for conducting the survey, notes that this CPR has not increased in the last five years.

The release of the FPS statistics came only a few days after Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri came out with the claim that the country's annual population growth rate had dropped from 2.36 percent to 1.95 percent. Neri came under fire after the announcement as people wondered how he could make that claim when the government has not conducted a national census since 2000.

The release of the latest FPS shows that little is happening in the area of family planning, so it would be a major miracle indeed if the population growth rate has dropped. Yet, President Macapagal-Arroyo came out shortly after Neri's announcement noting that drop in population growth rate and suggesting that family planning funds now be transferred to school-feeding programs.

The President was obviously responding to bad publicity from the latest Social Weather Stations survey on hunger in Filipino households. I wonder though if she has ever wondered if there's a connection between hunger and rapid population growth, one which is likely to continue if family planning usage remains at its current low rates.

Let me put the CPR figures in context. First, the national average of 49 percent reflects wide discrepancies. Cagayan Valley has the highest CPR with 58 percent, while the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has a dismal 16 percent. The National Capital Region (NCR) has a rate of 44 percent, lower than the national average.

One reason the national CPR of 49 percent is so infuriating is that we can't seem to at least break the 50 percent mark, even as other countries all over the world are racing ahead. To give a few examples from among our neighbors, Vietnam has a CPR of 79 percent; Thailand, 72 percent; Singapore, 62 percent; and Indonesia, 60 percent.

In these countries, a large percentage of the family planning users employ modern methods, meaning those that are reliable. In the Philippines, the 49 percent figure includes some 13 percent who are using methods like withdrawal, a crude method with a very high rate of failure.

Fears

Why aren't more Filipinos using family planning? The main reason, one which has persisted through the years, has not been religion. Muslim leaders in Mindanao, for example, issued a fatwa or religious edict a few years ago supporting family planning. And while Roman Catholic bishops oppose "artificial" family planning, most Catholics who are not using family planning have never heard of the papal encyclical Humanae Vitae, or the theological explanations of the "unitive" and "procreative" functions of marriage which are used to forbid "artificial" contraception.

What many Filipinos have heard are stories of "side effects" of family planning methods. In a research I conducted a few years back, these fears revolve mainly around the pill, with perceived dangers ranging from cancer to putting on weight. (I should say quickly that many low-income women actually saw the weight gain as a good thing, a sign that they had a good fit or *hiyang* with a particular brand.)

There are also "side effects" described for other modern methods. Tubal ligation, for example, is believed by many to lead to increased libido for the woman... and a potential for extramarital affairs.

The fears are often unfounded, based on hearsay as well as popular misconceptions about how the body works. For example, pills are believed to cause cancer because they are taken daily, leaving residues (*latak*) in the uterus that accumulate.

The connection between tubal ligation and increased libido may have been based partly on husbands' (and wives') observations that women are more sexually responsive and relaxed after the ligation. That shouldn't be surprising, considering that the fear of an unwanted pregnancy has been removed, but to equate that with nymphomania and extramarital pregnancies requires a fertile imagination.

The male imagination that is. Many of the fears around contraception are really male-based. The irony is that as our family planning program weakens, men become even more powerful.

How so? The misconceptions going around in relation to family planning are often perpetuated by a mixed bunch of men. A vocal few are opposed to family planning for religious reasons, but others couldn't care less about religion, their opposition based on machismo values that equate masculinity with having as many children as possible. Opposition from husbands was in fact mentioned together with a fear of side effects as the main reason for women wanting to drop out of family planning.

Losers

Perhaps what's so painful about the FPS findings is that women generally seem to want family planning, and are even willing to pay for services and methods. Yet their access to family planning has been shrinking under the present government.

The President claims she is in favor of choices, and, claiming that too much had been poured into "artificial" family planning methods like the pill, she has called for more resources to be poured into natural family planning (NFP). The Catholic organization Couples for Christ received P50 million from the Department of Health two years ago to do this, but the impact doesn't show in the FPS, which found NFP usage to be at a measly 0.4 percent. Reproductive health groups also observed that more time seemed to be spent spreading more misconceptions about "artificial" methods rather than promoting natural family planning itself.

Low family planning usage has many side effects for the nation. And who are the biggest losers in all this? It's the women, who have to face up to one unwanted pregnancy after another, often finding themselves having to raise children alone as the men abscond. It's the children who lose, with poorer health and nutrition, and higher dropout rates from schools.

There's a story going around about one city mayor in Mindanao who asked his parish priest, "Father, we have so many street children now. Could you allow them to sleep in your church?" The priest hesitated, and then explained that it would be too difficult for him to handle so many children. The wise mayor smiled and said, "Then, Father, would you mind keeping quiet when I promote family planning?"

The real Philippine Constitution

THE REAL FUNDAMENTAL LAW of the land in our country is not the 1987 Constitution but the debt conditions imposed on us by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The poverty and injustice torturing the Filipino masses are the handiwork of those conditions, not of the Constitution.

And the real purpose of the Charter change movement is to keep President Macapagal-Arroyo in power, in her capacity as the enforcer of the WB-IMF debt conditions in our country.

What are these debt conditions?

The first is automatic debt service. More than one-third of our annual national budget is automatically allocated for debt service; it is not subject to congressional action, although the Constitution provides that no money shall be taken out of the Treasury except by an act of Congress. Moreover, the allocation exceeds the item for education which, under the Constitution, ought to be the biggest.

The second is the EVAT law. GMA's claim that the EVAT increase and its imposition on oil and power was her decision is false. Without the new EVAT, our credit rating would have been downgraded further, and we would have been paying prohibitively high interests on our debts. If GMA made a decision at all, it was only to agree to pick the pockets of Filipinos and to automatically turn over her loot to the WB-IMF-protected creditors.

The third is the enactment of the Oil Deregulation Law which removed the government from the oil-price fixing picture. With this law in place, oil prices have been shooting up to the sky.

The fourth is the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira). This was a condition for the release of some $900 million in loans already approved by the WB-IMF. With the Epira, the government's generation and transmission assets are now being sold to foreign power players.

The fifth is the Mining Act of 1995. This was first declared by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional, but the decision has been reversed since. The first Supreme Court decision was in keeping with the 1987 Constitution; the second bore the telltales of the WB-IMF debt conditions.

In 1995, there was an omnibus WB-IMF debt condition: Philippine accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the reorientation of Philippine policies to the imperatives of globalization through liberalization, deregulation, privatization and level playing field. The result was the decimation of the economy, particularly manufacturing and agriculture—the country's principal employers. Today's unemployed and underemployed exceed 11 million workers. Most of the WB-IMF debt conditions, if not all, operate in defiance of the Constitution.

Today, in our country, sovereignty resides in the market, no longer in the people. The main function of government is to oversee the implementation of the WB-IMF debt conditions, not to look after the people's welfare as mandated by the Constitution.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Unit 301 Union Square
Condominium,
145 15th Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

Were released prisoners for real?

THIS IS IN REACTION to the comments of Speaker Jose de Venecia in relation to President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to Saudi Arabia. ("Arroyo trip to Saudi called major coup," PDI, 5/12/06) He considered King Abdullah's assurance of continuous oil supply to the Philippines as a major win for Ms Arroyo. The question is: Is the oil free, or sold at a lower price?

Our problem is not the source of supply, it is the price of the oil, which affects the budget of the Filipinos. Supply is not a problem as long as you have the money to pay for it.

On the overseas Filipino workers released from jail, based on the INQUIRER report, most of them were "imprisoned" because the establishments (employers) they were working for had closed shop. Others were said to have been jailed for minor offenses, like drinking alcohol.

It should be noted that in Saudi Arabia, it is normal for the government to put in a secured area expatriates whose employers can no longer pay them. This is done to protect the displaced employees. They are not real prisoners.

As for drinking alcohol, it is a violation of the Islamic law and is punishable by three months in jail and deportation to the home country in the case of expatriates.

The only reason why expatriate-prisoners get stranded in Saudi Arabia is that the concerned embassies (like the Philippine Embassy) do not efficiently coordinate with the Saudi Arabian government in facilitating their deportation. I know these things because I worked in Saudi Arabia for six years in the 1980s.

Do you think the head of a state like Saudi Arabia would release prisoners if they were real criminals? Please bear in mind that in that country, real criminals are physically separated from their heads.

The fact is, the OFWs who were released from Saudi Arabian jails were prisoners not because they committed serious crimes. They were prisoners because the Philippine government did not extend to them the needed, proper help. They were, therefore, not real prisoners. The claim that they were prisoners is just another piece of administration propaganda meant to mislead the Filipino people.

No, I'm neither with the opposition nor for them.

—ANDREW ONA,
roliemel@
yahoo.com.au

Don't stop protesting

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT STOP protesting the current regime. Those of us here in the United States have allowed the Bush crime family to take this country in a fascist direction. The more you let up, the more they take advantage of their power to strip us of the freedoms for which we had fought so hard.

Hold your leaders to account as we should be doing here in the United States. History is repeating itself in both our countries. We went through this with Richard Nixon, just as you went through this with Ferdinand Marcos.

Keep up the good fight. As Maria Theresa Pangilinan said so eloquently very recently, "*Patalsikin si* Gloria!"—**Matt in Jax, Florida (via e-mail)**

* * *

Let the politicians enact a law making election cheating punishable by death. Any politician who uses any form of cheating to win a mandate is actually betraying the public trust and, in the end, it is the whole nation that suffers.—**Ed Bolante (via e-mail)**

* * *

It's about time somebody brought back tact and courtesy in the Department of Justice. Raul Gonzalez's own statements—"Nobody can tell me to shut up," "I always speak my mind. I have never intervened on that case"—are conflicting. Let us remember that Gonzalez ordered the arrest of citizens suspected of going against the Arroyo administration, threatened a female university graduate for "disrupting" their graduation ceremony and criticized a former President regarding her way of disciplining her child.

"I have never intervened in that case," he said, in reference to the Subic rape case. Who is he kidding? He got irked when the judge disapproved his downgrading of the charges against the three US soldiers.

He is not meddling? He has muddled the case too many times. It's a good thing they got lawyer Evalyn Ursua to handle the case, and now other legal eagles are helping. Hopefully, they will make sense of the insensible Visiting Forces Agreement.

I wonder when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will begin to realize that it's about time she replaced some men in her Cabinet. And eventually she can follow them.—**Melba Irene Gabuya, Davao City (via e-mail)**

* * *

My solution to the problem of our country: GMA must resign to give way to the will of the people. Are we afraid who will be the next leader? It's our duty as citizens to select the best leader for our country.—**Edgardo de Castro (via e-mail)**

* * *

If we are talking about how to solve the country's problems, that's easy to answer. I just don't know if it's easy to do. It is this: Let the politicians, both from the opposition and the administration, do what they are supposed to do, which is to serve the people and lead this country to a better future. They should stop bickering and do their jobs, and not just try to look good.

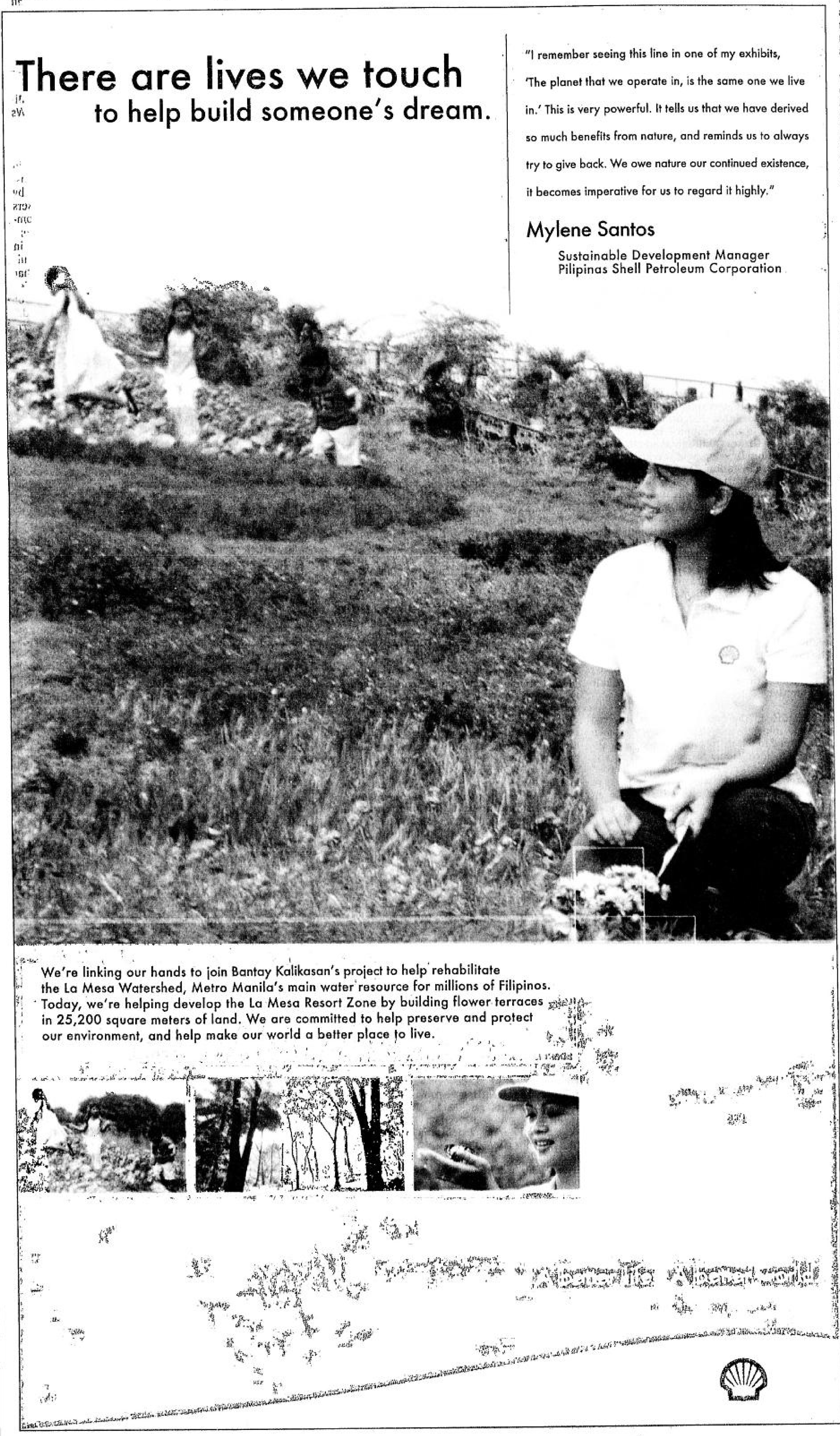
Hard, isn't it?—**Edwin Tayag (via e-mail)**

* * *

Let us recognize the symptom first before we talk about the real problem. President Arroyo has to step down or declare a snap election to prove that she does have the mandate of the people.

However, some people complicate the situation by mixing other challenges even before addressing the real issue. When you reap bad fruit, don't mix it with the good ones because it will just contaminate the others.

I heard some people say, "*Pabayaan na lang* and move on." If the Filipino people will not fix what is wrong to begin with, I cannot see any hope for the future. They have to learn change and they have to accept change.—**Robert L. Noble (via e-mail)**


There are lives we touch
to help build someone's dream.

"I remember seeing this line in one of my exhibits, 'The planet that we operate in, is the same one we live in.' This is very powerful. It tells us that we have derived so much benefits from nature, and reminds us to always try to give back. We owe nature our continued existence, it becomes imperative for us to regard it highly."

Mylene Santos
Sustainable Development Manager
Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation

We're linking our hands to join Bantay Kalikasan's project to help rehabilitate the La Mesa Watershed, Metro Manila's main water resource for millions of Filipinos. Today, we're helping develop the La Mesa Resort Zone by building flower terraces in 25,200 square meters of land. We are committed to help preserve and protect our environment, and help make our world a better place to live.

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Sorsogon town killings alarm execs

IROSIN, SORSOGON—AT LEAST 12 PERSONS have been assassinated in this town over the past eight months in what was described as vendetta killings between government forces and the New People's Army.

The victims were members of the armed forces and the Philippine National Police and those suspected of being supporters of the NPA.

The killings prompted the local government unit to call for a multi-sectoral peace dialogue Tuesday (May 16) to bring back peace to the town.

Mayor Lilia Gonzales described the situation as alarming and called on all sectors to join in the effort "to bring back peace and to stop the warring groups from turning Irosin into a killing filed."

"The situation is now sowing fear among our people and is already affecting the business sector," she told forum participants that included barangay officials, Church leaders, municipal council members, employees, businessmen, youth and ordinary citizens.

Gonzales said Irosin is now similar to other areas in the country where government forces and those identified with left-leaning organizations were being killed with impunity.

The killings started on Oct. 23 last year with the assassination of PO3 Jose Canuel, a member of the town's police force, said police chief Senior Insp. Diony Laceda.

The NPA issued a statement owning responsibility for the killing.

On Oct. 27, a member of the Philippine Army identified as Armando Gervas was killed in an attack believed perpetrated by the NPAs.

Three days later a Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) member, Jaime Gogola, was shot dead inside the town's cockpit while on Nov. 14, the detachment commander of an Army unit in Barangay Gabao, TSgt. Sigura, was killed.

The killings resumed in January with the death of Benito Guardacasa, a militiaman.

This was followed by the assassination of municipal councilor Max Frivaldo, a member of the militant group Bayan Muna.

In February, another Cafgu member, Armando Gogola, brother of Jaime, was also slain inside the cockpit, and in March a certain Pepito Manzilla was killed.

In April, Sgt. Julie Aliben and Cafgu Allan Tolosa were ambushed in Barangay Gumapia and on May 9, Barangay Captain Neal Futalan of Gabao was assassinated.

The latest killing occurred last May 15 with the death of Domingo Habla, a former NPA member turned Army personnel.

Fr. Jimmy Barrozo, the town's parish priest, appealed to both sides and to all sectors to help bring back normalcy and peace to the town.

The priest stressed the importance and sanctity of life and the people's basic right to it.

Councilor Isol Michelena, peace and order council chairman, asked the population to cooperate and help the authorities put an end to the spate of killings.

Bobby Labalan

ROUNDUP

Militiamen kill 4

KIAMBA, Sarangani—At least four people, including a 16-year-old boy, were killed after they were shot by two militiamen in Barangay Tambuli here, police said Thursday. The victims were identified as Ferdinand Alcontin, 27, and his younger brother Antonio, 24; Sasa Mendoza and 16-year-old Ronel Guillermo. The suspects, Erwin Loyloy and Alexander Gamulta, were arrested. Senior Insp. Leo Sua, Kiamba police chief, said the suspects had waylaid the Alcontin brothers on Tuesday evening. The attack was witnessed by Mendoza and Guillermo. Sua said the suspects shot the witnesses. However, Guillermo was still alive and was able to tell relatives who attacked him and the three other victims. The 64-year-old mother of the Alcontin brothers said that on Sunday, the suspects also fired at their house and wounded Ferdinand in the process. She said she could not understand why the militiamen were so angry with his son. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

8 still missing

ILOILO CITY—Eight crew members of a fishing boat that capsized in Iloilo at the height of tropical storm Caloy remain missing. Search and rescue operations are ongoing in the waters of Masbate for the crew members of fishing boat Marvin, according to reports of the Office of Civil Defense in Western Visayas. The boat capsized in Carles town in Iloilo last week due to strong winds and huge waves. The missing persons were identified as Ruben Colungon, Arniel Bersurto, Rudry Mahinay, Jimbo de Angel, Grantel Cornillo, Jerry Buncad, Nitoy Mangasang and Pagapar de Angel. All are residents of Barangay San Fernando on Sicogon Island, in Carles town.

Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau

Lightning kills boy

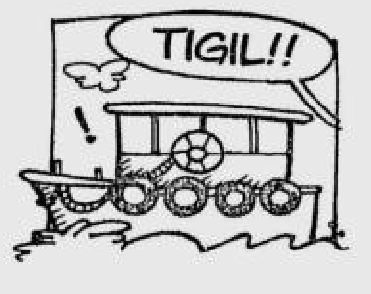
CEBU CITY—A 13-year-old boy was killed while his two younger brothers were wounded after they were struck by lightning on Wednesday. The fatality was identified as Welito Toling, of Barangay Canaocanao in Tabogon town, about 93 km north of Cebu City. His younger brothers—Junel, 11 and Galiner, 18 months old—were confined at the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu City. Galiner did not suffer any burns because he was tightly embraced by Welito when the lightning struck their house, according to their aunt Rosalinda Abing. Abing, who was attending to the nephews at the hospital, said the brothers were playing in the backyard when the lightning struck them. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Suspected fixer slain

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Two motorcycle-riding men shot dead a suspected fixer at the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in front of the Lyceum University in Batangas City on Wednesday. Supt. Nilo Anzo, Batangas City police chief, identified the victim as Vic Rommel Jayson Tolentino, 23, a resident of SWA site, Barangay Kumintang Ibaba, Batangas City. Anzo said the victim was walking toward the LTO office at about 7 a.m. when the suspects suddenly approached and shot him before escaping toward the city proper. Anzo said they are looking into the possibility that the killing was related to the victim's alleged job as a fixer at the local LTO office.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Indons arrested



DAVAO CITY—Government security forces in Compostela Valley arrested at least nine Indonesian sailors after the company they work for reported that they hijacked the vessel they were manning. Senior Supt. Nestor Quinsay, Compostela Valley police director, said in April, PT Multi Jaya reported that its tugboat, TB Martha Dini, was commandeered by its crew and was suspected to be in Philippine waters. Quinsay said they have since been on alert for the tugboat and finally intercepted it in Maco town on Tuesday morning. Indonesian Consul Bambang Gunawan told the INQUIRER that the tugboat sailed from North Sumatra and was supposed to be heading for South Kalimantan. "They were supposed to reach South Kalimantan on April 24 but they didn't arrive," Gunawan said. Quinsay said the suspects were brought to the regional police headquarters for investigation.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Piggery burns

LEGAZPI CITY—At least 128 pigs were either roasted or burned live when a piggery at Barangay Dita here caught fire on Tuesday. The city fire department placed the damage at P500,000. Observers believed the blaze was intentionally carried out since the piggery owned by a certain Manuel Malana had long been complained of for its foul odor. Even so, residents feasted on the roasted pigs that the owner shared with the villagers.

Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Motorcycle seats ripped up

LEGAZPI CITY—Still looking for a solution to the series of arson-related fires in this convention city, local public safety officials are facing a new annoying act by mischief-makers. The upholstered seats of at least five motorcycles parked at the Provincial Disaster Operation Center premises were slashed by pranksters on Monday. Two days before, a motorcycle parked at the parking lot of a city mall suffered similar damage. The suspects have been identified, according to city police chief Supt. Narciso Guarin, but witnesses are needed to pin down the culprits. City officials urged owners of malls and buildings to tighten security.

Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

38 Pinoys jailed for strike in Saudi back home

BAGUIO CITY—THIRTY-EIGHT overseas Filipino workers who staged a strike against their Saudi Arabia employer have returned home after being detained for four months in Riyadh.

They were released on May 8 after their Manila-based recruitment agency paid 121,600 Saudi rial (about P1,580,800) to their employer, the Annasban Group.

Most of them came from the Visayas, Metro Manila, Pampanga, La Union, Isabela, Benguet and Baguio City.

The demand for a return pay was made by Annasban when the Philippine labor attache' mediated for the workers' release, according to Mariel Taguba, one of the returning workers.

In January, 15 of these workers staged a strike when they protested their employer's alleged human rights abuses and breach of job contracts.

The workers were detained at the rooftop of a government building in Riyadh. The following month, the rest of the workers also staged a strike and were detained on the first floor of the same building.

The workers accused their employer of violating their job contracts. They applied as janitors but were made to work as caregivers at a mental hospital in Riyadh, they said.

They also complained of illegal pay deductions, nonpayment of overtime pay and lack of food.

"It was all pain and suffering when we arrived at the hospital. We thought we were going to work as janitors, but when we arrived there ... we were made to work as caregivers," Taguba said in a forum here on Thursday.

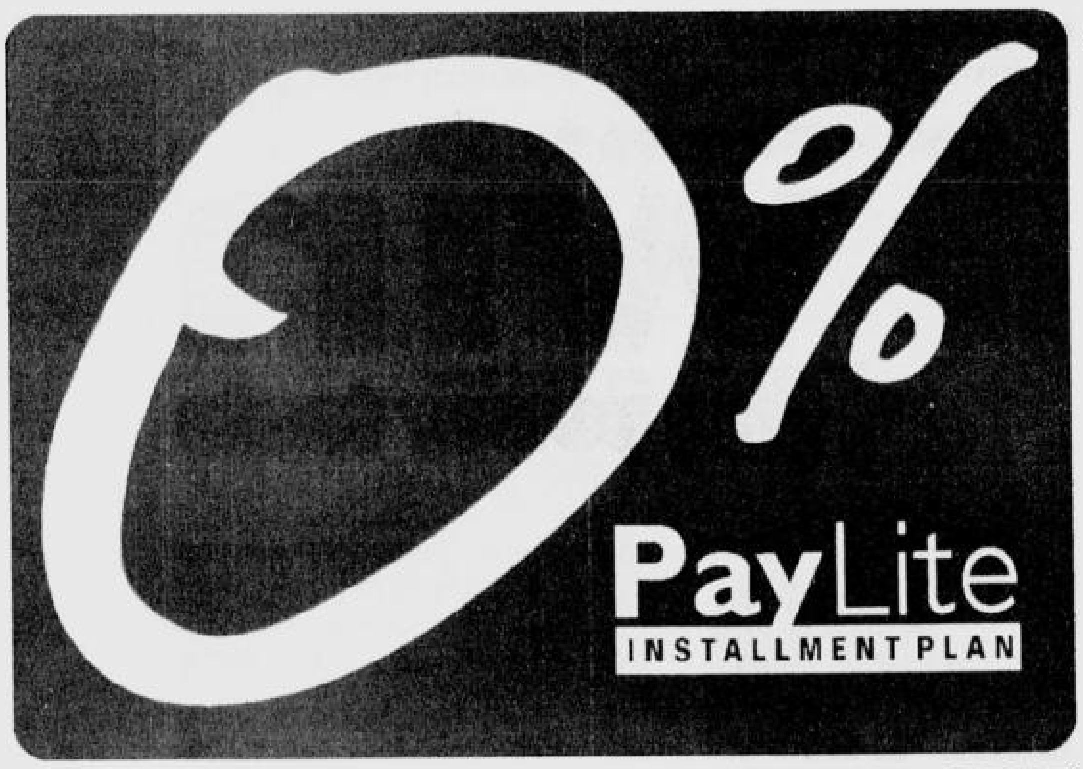
"I was shocked and I said 'God, what is happening to us? We just came there to work as janitors.' It was so hard for us because the patients tended to hurt us physically. They would hit our faces and heads," she said.

Regina Gam-an, 25, of Bauko, Mt. Province, said they experienced lack of food while detained by their employer. Other Filipino workers in Riyadh donated food when they learned about their plight.

Flora Belinan, chair of Migrante-Cordillera, said the OFWs were victims of contract substitution.

"They were forced to sign the contract which was written in Arabic and which was not translated to them. As promised by their recruiter, these workers were to have free food, accommodation, free medical and dental expenses and a day holiday in a week. But none of these was fulfilled. The worst thing was that they were not paid their salaries on time thus depriving them of money to buy their own food."

Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau



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Bacolod bishop declares war on signature drive

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—THE DIOCESE of Bacolod, led by Bishop Vicente Navarra, launched a sustained protest drive against what it called a "fake people's initiative" for Charter change.

Priests and parishioners, during the religious march, carried placards that read "Reject the fake people's initiative," "Oppose the extension of terms of politicians," and "Uphold pro-Filipino, pro-country laws."

The rally would be followed by a massive information dissemination campaign against Cha-cha in the parishes and by a caravan from various parts of the Diocese of Bacolod to culminate with a massive rally at the public plaza on June 12, said Fr. Aniceto Buenafe, social action director of the diocese.

Navarra, in a statement issued during the launching, said this was not the time to change the Constitution because the government could not be trusted.

"The move to change the 1987 Constitution now poses a grave danger to our nation and if we do not oppose it we will become part of the wrong that it will cause," Navarra said.

Even if the 1987 Constitution has its defects, it is the offspring of the "people power" revolution where the people regained power from Ferdinand Marcos, he said.

Navarra also pointed out that despite a Supreme Court ruling that an enabling law was necessary for a people's initiative for Charter change, the administration still endorsed this "deceitful" move.

He also said many of those signing the people's initiative for Charter change did not totally understand what it was about.

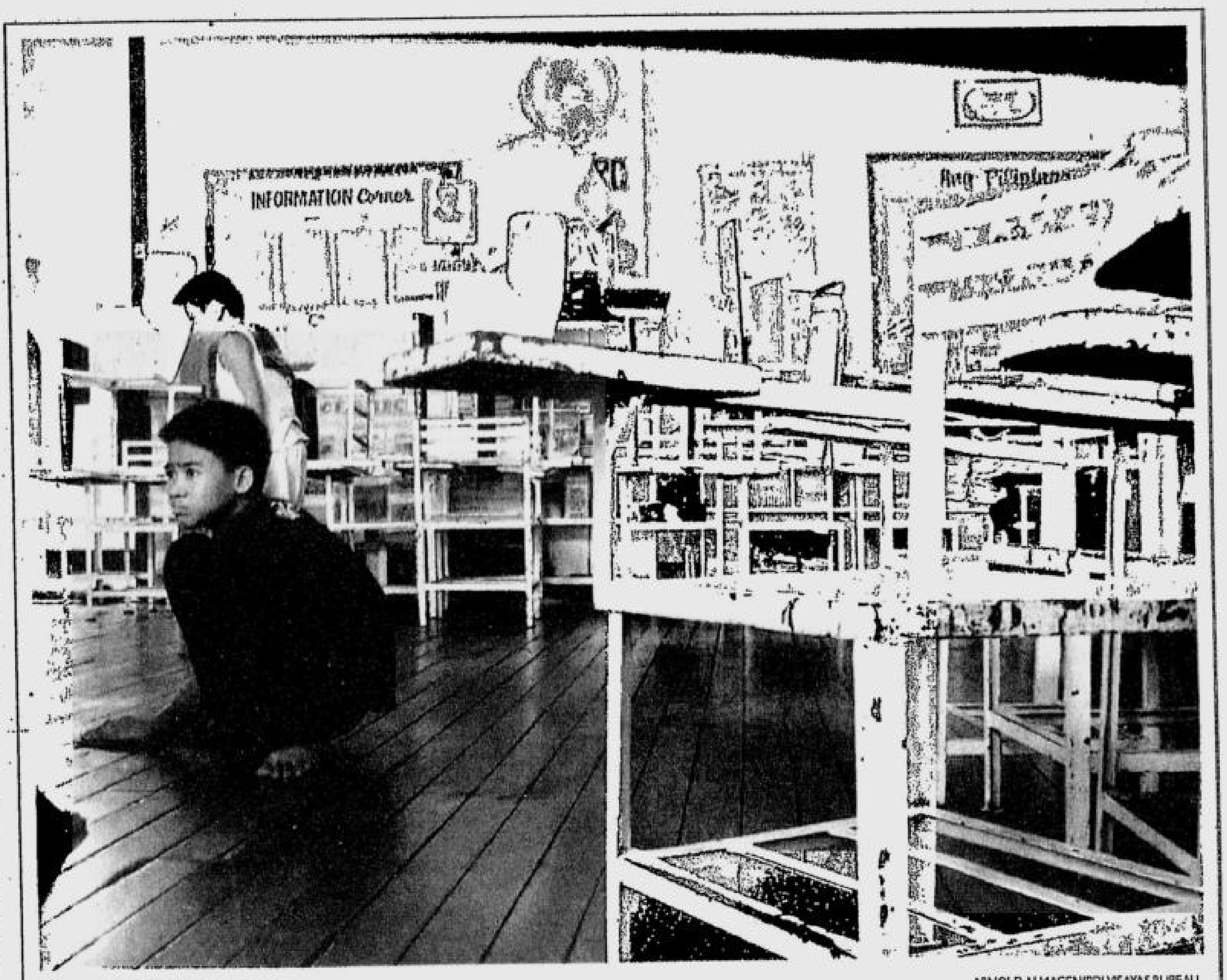
"We are opposing Charter change now because of the deceitful manner in which it is being carried out through a people's initiative. It will allow those already in power to remain there, and it will remove the pro-Filipino, pro-country provisions of the 1987 Constitution," Navarra said.

The Cha-cha endorsed by the administration would take the power away from the people and prolong the stay in power of those already there with the planned removal of the limits on terms of office, Navarra said.

Navarra said that those in government should instead have the political will to implement the pro-Filipino, pro-country provisions of the Constitution.

"Filipinos or the government should control the wealth of the nation and foreigners should only infuse 40 percent of the capital in business ventures," he said.

"Division of the wealth of the nation must be for the good of all like agrarian reform. Education should be made affordable to all and the largest share of the budget should go to education, and nationalism and patriotism should be instilled in our students," he added.



ARNOLD ALMACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

FIRST LESSON
Elementary students help clean their classroom in preparation for the opening of classes next month at the Jaro I Elementary School in Iloilo City.

Marcos money benefitted Cordillera through agri

BAGUIO CITY—PART OF THE MONEY THAT the government had recovered from the ill-gotten wealth of the late President Ferdinand Marcos had funded programs for land reform beneficiaries in the Cordillera, an official of the Department of Agrarian Reform said.

"Here in the Cordillera, the flow of money from the Marcos wealth never stopped. The money went immediately to the agrarian reform fund," Renato Navata, DAR Cordillera director, said in a forum here on Wednesday.

Navata said from January 2005 until April this year, a total of 45 projects were implemented through funds drawn from the recovered Marcos funds.

He said at least P16.95 million had been used to fund projects such as farm to market roads and post-harvest facilities.

The DAR, he said, has been waiting for the release of another P31 million to implement 22 projects this year.

He said the funds' release was the response to proposals submitted by local government units to DAR in 2004.

Navata said former Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, in 2003, had issued a directive to DAR's regional offices asking them to solicit agrarian reform-related project proposals from local governments.

Pagdanganan, in past reports, said the government had allotted P30 billion for agrarian reform-related projects such as the construction of farm to market roads, agricultural facilities, land payment and school buildings in remote villages.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, in an interview here last month, denied reports that the recovered Marcos funds were inappropriately used.

Navata said the biggest chunk of funds for agrarian reform projects in the Cordillera still came from foreign funding agencies.

He said foreign funding agencies had given the regional DAR P210.75 million for the construction of farm to market roads, post-harvest facilities and water systems.

Julio Ocufo, division chief of the support services of DAR Cordillera, said the DAR has used part of the Marcos funds as counterpart for foreign-assisted projects.

Navata said the DAR is implementing the third phase of the agrarian reform infrastructure support project under the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

Navata said DAR is also set to distribute 1,900 hectares of farmlands to agrarian reform beneficiaries in the region. Last year, 3,000 hectares of farmlands were distributed to 2,712 beneficiaries, he said. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Davao-based cult leader says he's not afraid of controversial movie

DAVAO CITY—CULT LEADER APOLLO QUIBOLOY has endorsed the movie adaptation of fictionist Dan Brown's controversial book "The Da Vinci Code," saying he was confident it would not shake his followers' faith.

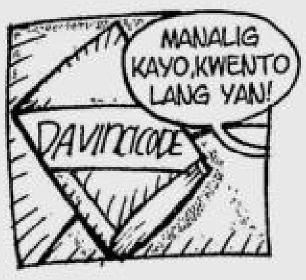
Quiboloy, who has described himself as the "Son of God," said he would not stop his followers if they want to see the film.

Quiboloy founded the Davao-based Christian movement Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Name above every name, which operates a satellite television station and several radio stations. The group has membership all over the world.

"Let it come. I am sure that my people's faith will not be shattered by one film. My faith is solid, my people's faith in God is solid. Let it come," he said over his regular program on ACQ-KBN, his group's flagship satellite TV station.

Quiboloy's endorsement came in the wake of efforts by some Christian groups to have the film banned in the country.

Even the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), known for espousing a conservative form of Islamic practice, had called for the banning of the film saying it is "anti-religion."



The Palace also seemed to have taken the position of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who considers the movie blasphemous and that it should not be shown in Philippine theaters.

Ermita even issued an unsolicited advice to the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) to exercise prudence by not allowing the screening of the film.

The MTRCB approved the film's showing and gave it an R-18 rating.

Quiboloy smirked at those who opposed the showing of the film and accused them of having weak faith and being "religiously insecure."

"Those who are against the film only show that they are not so sure about their faith. They are not confident about it that they think it will be destroyed by this film. This only goes to show, too, that even if the Philippines is a Christian country, the faith of the people is not that (tight) yet," Quiboloy said.

In the movie, Jesus married Mary Magdalene, a union that started a supposedly secret bloodline.

It also showed how Opus Dei, a conservative Christian group, tried to keep this secret for so long.

But Quiboloy said he does not care if the marriage was real. *Jeffrey Tupas, PDI M. Bureau*

Waves threaten 500 Ilocos families

LAOAG CITY—BIG WAVES INDUCED BY winds brought about by tropical storm Caloy on Wednesday forced nearly 500 families in the coastal towns of Pagudpud and Pasuquin to seek safer grounds.

At least 75 families in Pagudpud and 385 families in Pasuquin living near the coast moved to higher grounds when high waves began swamping their homes.

The weather station at the Laoag International Airport said Ilocos Norte had experienced unusually strong winds since Wednesday that were spawned by Caloy.

Cynthia Iglesia, the station's chief meteorologist, advised residents in the coastal villages to stay in safer grounds while wind blows were unusually strong because, she said, high waves could still be generated by this weather condition.

The station said strong winds had produced waves as high as five meters and a high tide of one meter.

Big waves also struck some coastal villages in Ilocos Sur on May 16.

"We are looking at similar conditions both in Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte. This condition may still persist because winds are unusually strong and lasting for long hours," Iglesia said.

"When strong wind blows combine with the high tide, seawater caused by high waves piles up at the shoreline and cannot immediately retreat back to the sea," she said.

Social workers from the provincial government who brought relief goods to Pasuquin on Wednesday noted that seawater had reached the town's highway.

Pasuquin and Pagudpud are exposed to the South China Sea and are nearer to Caloy's path, weathermen said. *Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

NBI probes politicians, leftists behind fish scare

LEGAZPI CITY—THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation said it would look into the source of a hoax that caused a fish scare in Sorsogon and loss of income for the province's fishermen and determine if politicians and leftist organizations should be held accountable for it.

Lawyer Tomas Enrile, head of the NBI Bicol district office, said it was possible that some politicians and militant groups were behind the fish scare that deprived fishermen of income in Sorsogon and in Rapu-Rapu, Albay, site of Lafayette Philippines Inc.'s (LPI) mining operations.

Enrile told members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Albay (SPA) in its session last week that his team was taking the issue seriously. If there was indeed a hoax, its (NBI) findings would have implications on national security, he said.

The SPA sought the investigation after reports of cyanide and mercury contamination triggered the fish scare in Sorsogon.

Enrile said the bureau was now establishing the identities of the groups that submitted certain fish samples for testing and used the results to scare the people from eating fish.

"There seems to be a deliberate effort to get bad results that was used to scare the public," Enrile said.

Initial NBI findings showed the fish samples were transported on a Philtranco bus and brought to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Manila for analysis.

The BFAR conducted tests on the samples and released its findings, which were then used by antimining groups as evidence that Lafayette's mining project caused the contamination of water and fish in the coastal areas of Sorsogon.

About 5,000 fishermen suffered losses as a result of the fish scare.

Five studies done later by the BFAR and two by the UP National Science Research Institute showed that the fish and water samples from Sorsogon were within tolerable levels and fit for human consumption.

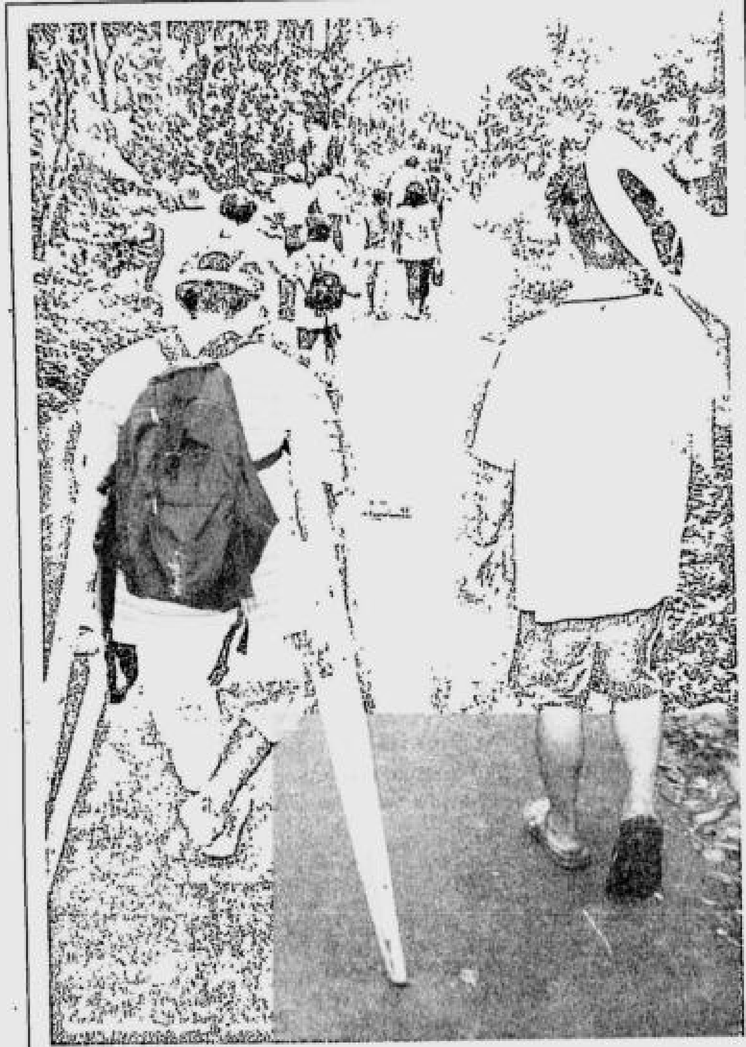
Mines and Geosciences Bureau Bicol director Reynulfo Juan said the Multi-Tripartite Monitoring Committee was finalizing its report to be submitted to Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzalez, the report confirmed that the waters in Albay Gulf and Sorsogon were now free from chemical contamination.

Earlier, Tanggol Kalikasan took up the cudgels for the fishermen by filing court charges against Lafayette.

In the May 9 session of the SPA, Board Member Jose Saribong, committee on environment chair, moved for a favorable endorsement of the restart of Lafayette's mining operations.

Other members of the council, however, said there was already a previous understanding on record to wait for the Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission's report before the SPA acts on the endorsement.

Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



SAFETY DRILL NINO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A man in crutches joins a tsunami drill, the first ever in the country, in Sto. Domingo, Albay. The drill was the first to be held to test a tsunami warning system in the Pacific Ocean that has been in place for years but was never tested.

Doc quits amid probe of drug overprice

DAVAO CITY—A RANKING health executive in Compostela Valley province resigned amid allegations he was involved in the overpricing of medicines the provincial government bought in 2004.

The anomaly was being investigated by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan.

But Dr. Jose Eulalio Dujali, Montevista District Hospital Chief, said his resignation has nothing to do with the allegations.

"I just feel it's about time that I should devote my full time to private practice," Dujali said.

Dujali, along with Gov. Jose Caballero, provincial administrator Anesio Ranario and provincial budget officer Joel Reterbo were being accused of jacking up the amount of the 2004 medicine purchase for the hospital by as much as 1,200 percent.

Caballero has denied any wrongdoing saying he signed the purchase order because it was his duty and that he believed it was in order.

Caballero said the local audit office had supported his position and had cleared him of any wrongdoing.

In a statement faxed to the INQUIRER, the Commission on Audit based in Nabunturan, Compostela Valley, said "the purchase request is valid and order" and "that the purchase order to San Marino was found to have substantially complied with all the rules and regulations."

The COA also said the prices reflected in the purchase order were the prices found in the bid tender of San Marino Laboratories Corp., "the lone complying and responsive bidder determined by the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)."

It also said that the purchase of various drugs and medicines from San Marino, which amounted to more than P587,000, was "made in accordance with the provisions of R.A. 9184."

But the Sangguniang Panlalawigan said despite this, the four "offending" officials would be charged at the Ombudsman. *Bert Pacate and Dennis Jay Santos with a report from Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Journalist to sue dad for attack in San Pablo

CALAMBA CITY—A MEMBER OF the San Pablo City council is in hot water after he physically assaulted a host of a local TV program and columnist of a weekly tabloid while the council was in session on Tuesday.

Councilor Edgardo Adajar was caught on video while he was attacking journalist Iring Maranan just outside the session hall at the eight floor of the new city hall building at about 11:30 a.m.

Maranan hosts "Sapul, Walang Sablay" program on Channel 17 of the local cable network in San Pablo and writes a column for the weekly tabloid "Ratsada Balita."

He was an ardent critic of alleged anomalies at the city government which led him to file administrative and criminal charges at the Ombudsman against Adajar and 13 others, including Mayor Vicente Amante, Vice Mayor Lauro Vidal and seven other city councilors, last year.

The case stemmed from a supposed highly irregular land deal which, he said, cost the local government millions of pesos.

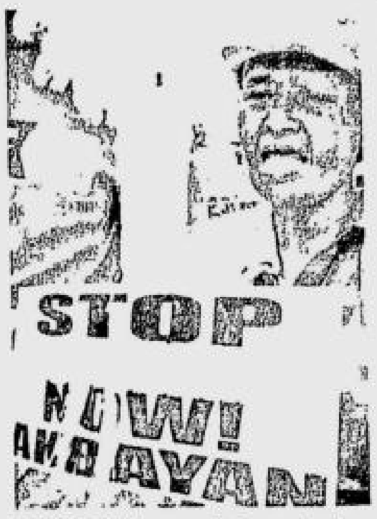
Speaking with the INQUIRER over his mobile phone, Maranan said he felt insulted and degraded by the attack.

According to his account, he was with fellow journalist Dodie Banzuela and was supposed to cover the regular session of the city council when they were barred from entering the session hall by a city hall employee.

He said moments later, an angry Adajar went out of the session hall and charged at him while shouting invectives.

"Adajar was furious. He was trying to drag me inside the session hall," Maranan said.

He said Adajar cursed him and even placed his arm around his neck as the councilor dragged him inside the session hall. "Then he kicked me."


STOP
NOW!
AKBAYAN!

MILITANT groups join protests against attacks on journalists.

ALANAH TORRALBA/PDI PHOTO

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Adajar to get his reaction.

Maranan, a member of the Laguna chapter of the National Union of Journalist of the Philippines (NUJP), said the incident was witnessed by about 100 people, including other San Pablo-based journalists.

He said a sister of Adajar was also cursing him while the councilor was beating him up.

He said he tried not to fight back "because he was an elected official."

"I said to myself that I will not stoop down to his level," Maranan said.

Adajar only stopped when a policeman interceded, Maranan said.

After the attack, Maranan went to the local police station and reported the attack. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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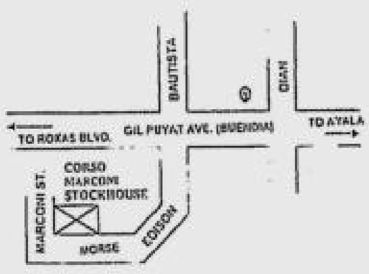

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All Lyceum Law alumni are cordially invited to a **Testimonial Dinner** in honor of the successful examinees and the Faculty on Monday, **22 May 2006, 6:30 pm** at the **Hyatt, Malate, Manila.** To reserve a dinner seat, please call **Mel /Lucky** at **893-9299** or text **Leanard (0917-6244176)** or **Mei-Lin (0906-2867970)**.

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PRESERVE THE LA MESA WATERSHED!

We the undersigned, acting for and in behalf of the 12 million inhabitants of Metro Manila, and representing various organizations concerned with a sustainable future for the next generations of Filipinos yet unborn, hereby come together and declare that:

- We uphold the right of Filipino households in Metropolitan Manila to have unimpeded access to clean drinking water.
- We strongly advocate the protection and preservation of the La Mesa Reservoir, as one of the largest alternative water sources of Metro Manila.
- We strongly oppese the privatization of the 59- hectare portion of the La Mesa Reservation Area, for the purpose of establishing housing units therein, on the basis of a 2004 scientific and technical findings of the National Hydraulic Research Center UP College of Engineering, which recommended that " It would be in the best interest of the MWSS and the General Public who eventually utilize from drinking the water in the La Mese Reservoir that the 58- hectaresof the La Mesa Watershed area being proposed for the MWSS Housing Project REMAIN A PROTECTED WATERSHED AREA AND NOT BE CONVERTED TO A HOUSING PROJECT AREA".
- We strongly object to the endangerment of the largest remaining forest of its size in Metro Manila located adjacent to a vital water resource combined with the water from Angat and IPO Dams, considered to be among the top three of the largest sources of drinking water in Southeast Asia;
- We seek to uphold the integrity of the water supply of Metro Manila which is in clear and imminent danger of contamination ifthe MWSS employee housing development is established in the planned site;
- We call on all residents of Metro Manila to join us in asserting our right to clean water and healthy environment, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines;
- The preservation of the Metro Manila's largest remaining forest located at the La Mesa Watershed and the protection of a critical source of drinking water for 12 million inhabitants of Metro Manila is our responsibility;
- We call on the government and the MWSS management to exhaust all means to put an end to the 38-year plight of deserving awardees/claimants of the 59-hectare land and provide a viable location for the housing project, without prejudicing the inalienable rights of millions of residents of Metro Manila to clean water and livable environment.

We urge the Government to declare the La Mesa Watershed a Protected area!

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte
Quezon City

Nanette Castelo Daza
District IV, Quezon City

Renato Diaz
Presidential Assistant for Central Luzon

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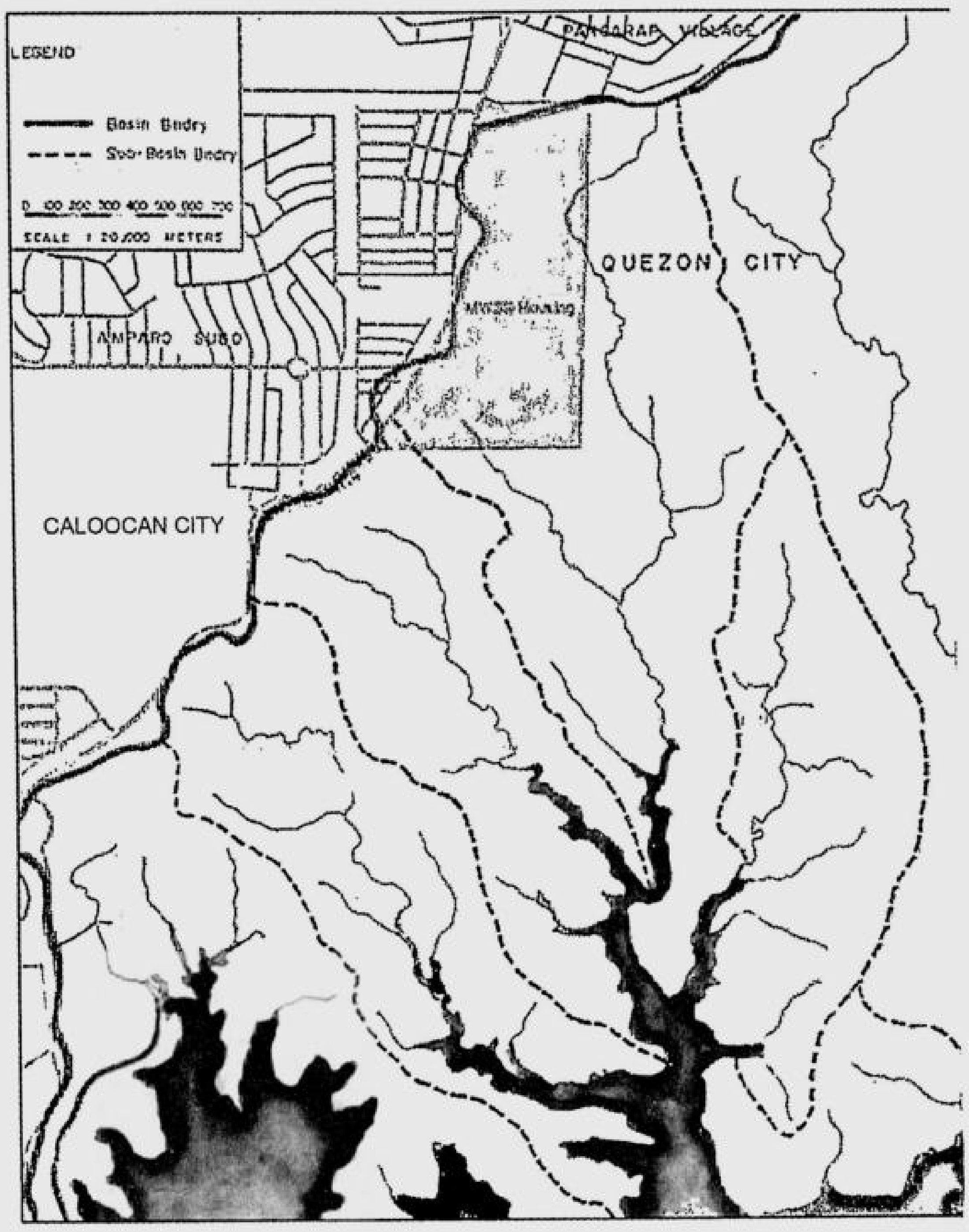

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Rafael Alunan III
First Phil. Infrastructure Development

John Paul Balayon
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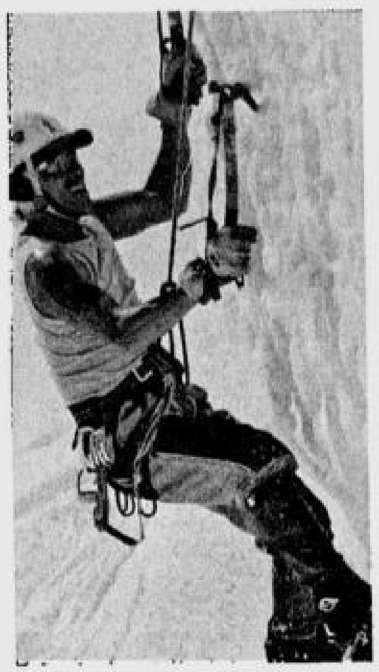
For more info on the Save the La Mesa Coalition, call +63 (2) 925-3333 or +63 (2) 415-2227 or visit www.lamesaecopark.com & you can download signature forms from the website.

Second Filipino conquers Everest



TRAINING FOR EVEREST: This handout photo of Leo Oracion shows him scaling the vertical wall of Mount Aylmer in New Zealand in March. STRATWORKS

From page A1

a bottleneck of climbers along the trail, Emata was not held up by "traffic."

Also, Sebastian said, by the time Emata began the final leg of his climb, the fixed rope lines from Camp 4 to the summit had been put in place. In Oracion's case, he had to wait for Sherpas to set up the lines.

Not complete without Garduce

In a phone patch interview with reporters at the National Sports Grille in Greenbelt, Makati, Valdez called for prayers for another Filipino climber, Romi Garduce, who is also attempting to scale Everest. *(See story on this page.)*

"The Philippine expedition to Everest in 2006 will not be complete if Romi will not make it to the summit and back safely," said Valdez, a former transportation undersecretary.

Valdez also said that as a former president of the Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines Inc., he was "looking forward" to the success of Garduce.

"All Filipino mountaineers should be able to accomplish their objectives. We would like Filipinos to be in good safe hands," he added.

Garduce is principally backed by the broadcast network GMA 7, and Oracion and Emata by ABS-CBN.

'Filipino excellence'

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo twice took time out from work to congratulate Oracion and Emata.

"[T]he entire nation also shares the joy and pride of the [FPMEE] led by Leo Oracion on their achievement. Even as we speak, we also heard news of the outstanding feat of another Filipino, Erwin 'Pastor' Emata," she said.

Ms Arroyo first noted the climbers' feat during a program at the Palace on the latest alternative fuel being promoted by the government.

Later, in a televised roundtable discussion on the remittances of overseas Filipino workers, she again made mention of the singular achievement.

"The conquest of the world's highest peak is a mark of Filipino excellence, perseverance and courage in braving the hard trek of nation-building," Ms Arroyo said.

She took the occasion to declare that she was "committed to a vision that will not falter in the face of adversity," and that "the entire government" was "also ready to mount the peak in public service."

"The people shall be the prime beneficiaries of all our efforts to make every centavo count in vital and urgent projects to engender political and economic stability and bring the payback of reforms to the doorsteps of the poor," she said.

'Good example'

Vice President Noli de Castro also expressed appreciation for the achievement of Oracion and Emata, saying it proved that no obstacle was insurmountable for Filipinos.

De Castro likewise praised Garduce, pointing out that the latter's resolve to reach the peak of Everest was "equally heroic."

"These mountaineers should serve as a good example to all Filipinos so that the nation will reach, not only the summit of Mt. Everest, but also the peak of progress and development," De Castro said in Filipino. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Cynthia D. Balana*

Lawmakers cite Oracion for 'outstanding feat'

HERACLEO "LEO" ORACION received commendations in the Senate and House of Representatives yesterday for conquering Mt. Everest.

Senators Richard Gordon and Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. filed separate resolutions hailing Oracion for his "outstanding feat that boosted Filipinos' image abroad."

Oracion and other Filipino mountaineers in his expedition "have done the nation proud and have shown the world the Filipinos' capacity to excel," Villar said.

Gordon said Oracion and the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition proved "that with focus, hard work and fortitude, Filipinos can make a difference in the world," Gordon said.

"They risked their lives in scaling the heights of the world's highest mountain, symbolizing that we as a people can indeed overcome the greatest of challenges and stand proud among the members of the global community," he said.

House Deputy Minority Leader Satur Ocampo and his fellow militant lawmakers filed House Resolution No. 1252, lauding the mountaineers as great examples and an inspiration for the entire country.

"The House should commend Oracion, Emata and Garduce who brought honor and pride to the nation through their Mt. Everest feats. They showed virtues of perseverance and patriotism despite insurmountable odds," the resolution said.

"Their example ought to be emulated by every Filipino, especially with the huge national and social problems the nation now faces. We join the people in national rejoicing over this clear triumph of the Filipino," it added.

"We likewise have the capacity to overcome problems bigger than Everest. Oracion et al. are thus great inspirations," he added. *TJ Burgonio and Philip C. Tubeza*

Skeptical Emata pal now looking for 'lechon' money

From page A1

would make it, Rey Sumagaysay said he now had to keep his end of the agreement he made with the climber on Saturday: "I guess I will be forced to look for money to buy *lechon*."

"I had told him to just plant the Philippine flag once he got there," said Sumagaysay, an original member of the First Philippine Mount Everest Expedition.

But when reports came in that Pastor, also of the FPMEE, had made it, Sumagaysay expressed thanks and relief.

As did Pastor's wife, Mary Ann, who said: "We are so happy and excited for his return."

Mary Ann said the family's anxiety was replaced by a feeling of fulfillment on knowing that her husband had succeeded in his climb.

Strategy

She pointed out, however, that Pastor still had to make the descent, which was an equally dangerous undertaking. "My fears are not yet over," she said.

Still, she said, the family was confident that Pastor would make it down safely.

And the family members had made plans for Pastor's homecoming. The first thing they will do is attend Mass together, Mary Ann said.

According to Sumagaysay, it was agreed that Leo Oracion would be the first to climb Everest as part of the FPMEE strategy.

"If one failed, there would still be another one to continue the climb. That was why [Oracion and Emata] did not climb together," he said.

Red carpet

In Cebu City, the red carpet will be rolled out for Leo Oracion, the first Filipino to reach the peak of Mt. Everest.

Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia said Oracion would be conferred the Garbo sa Sugbo award, an annual recognition given by the provincial government to outstanding Cebuanos during the province's founding anniversary in August.

"It is a very historical [achievement], and more so, it is also a major source of pride for us Cebuanos," the governor said of Leo's feat.

"For one thing, it shows a courageous spirit. It is a testimonial to the indomitable Cebuano spirit," she said.

Although a native of Lucban, Quezon, Leo became a Cebuano by choice when he chose to live in Cebu after marrying a Cebuana, Garcia said.

Mandaue City Mayor Thadeo Ouano said Leo would be given a hero's welcome upon his return.

A resident of Barangay Cubacub in Mandaue, Leo will receive a cash incentive apart from the award.

"In behalf of the people of Mandaue, I would like to congratulate Leo Oracion for bringing pride and honor to the country and to the city," Ouano said, adding:

Happy Kit

"He has shown every Filipino what a Mandauehanon is made of—strong, patient, determined. His feat is a testament that Mandaue is ready for the world."

Another happy and proud person is Leo's 5-year-old daughter Leah Marie Angela, called "Kit" by her family.

"Nalipay ko (I am happy)," the girl told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "Thank you, Dada, *kay nanalo ka* (because you won)."

Leo's sister Loreta, Kit and other family members were housed in a hotel in Manila yesterday to await a phone call from him.

Loreta said the family did not know when Leo could come home, but it was possible he would first go to Lucban before flying to Cebu.

She admitted that the people and officials of Lucban had felt bad because of TV advertisements saying Leo was a Cebuano.

Still, Loreta thanked the people of Cebu for considering her brother a Cebuano.

Lifeguard and receptionist

Leo went to Cebu in 1995 to follow Loreta, an architect who was invited a year earlier to join the team that would build the house of Jonkie Ouano, son of the Mandaue mayor, and the family-owned resto-bar Yo Latino.

A computer science graduate, Leo worked as a lifeguard at the Shangri-La Mactan Island Resort and Spa in Lapulapu City, where he met his future wife, Angel, who worked there as a receptionist.

He married Angel, a native of Dalaguete, Cebu, in 2001, according to Loreta.

In 2002, Loreta acquired a unit in Deca Homes in Barangay Cubacub, Mandaue. Leo and his family stayed with Loreta there.

According to Mandaue Councilor Allan Borbajo, Angel was assigned to Amman, Jordan, by the Shangri-La management in February.

Loreta said that after Leo's feat, she and other family members would try to convince him to stop conquering the world's tallest mountains for his safety.

She said it would be good for him to focus on his own family now.

Leo's promise

In Lucban, Leo's mother Siony, 63, said she had never wavered in her belief that her son would make it to the summit of Everest.

"He was here last New Year's Day and that's what he promised us, that he would reach the top of Mt. Everest," said the mother, who suffered a stroke five years ago.

Leo's most recent call to his mother was in April, when he was already in Nepal preparing for his climb.

"He again repeated the same pledge, that he would reach the top of Mt. Everest. We all believed he really could," said his youngest sister, Mineth.

Mineth described her brother as an all-around athlete who was into other sports like swimming, volleyball, basketball, biking and kayaking.

"Sometimes, he would bike his way home from Manila," she said.

Leo's father, Guillermo, 73, is now in Manila, escorted by an ABS-CBN crew. *Reports from Dennis Jay Santos and Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Third Filipino climber on track for 1-2-3 finish

From page A1

p.m. He is aware of [Oracion and Emata's achievement] and is happy for the two climbers. It has never been a race for him. That's why he chose to stick to his schedule."

Orteza added that what was most important was the climber's safety.

GMA 7's news site, www.gmanews.tv, said Garduce was "expected to make it to the summit on Friday."

Orteza quoted Garduce as saying in Filipino: "I am happy for the success of Leo Oracion and Erwin Emata. It has never been my intention to engage in a race. I have proceeded according to my plan and my pace. I chose my own pace so that we would be dispersed and Filipinos would have a bigger chance [to make it to the peak]."

Rivalry

The expeditions of Garduce and of Oracion and Emata had been hyped up as another point of rivalry between the two giant networks, GMA 7 and ABS-CBN.

Asked if there was a perception or feeling within GMA 7 that the network had "lost" this competition, Orteza laughed.

"We have never treated this as a competition," Orteza said, adding that GMA 7 was supportive of Garduce because it was a sponsor of his climb.

Whoever got to the summit first would be great news for the country all the same, he added.

Garduce left for Nepal in March to give himself enough time to acclimatize to the harsh conditions on Everest (29,035 feet or 8,850 meters).

Not commercial climb

He climbed Tibet's Mt. Cho-Oyu (26,906 feet) in September 2005. On Jan. 1 of that year, he became the first Filipino to climb Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina, at 22,831 feet the highest mountain in the Western hemisphere.

Oracion and Emata's reconnaissance climb was part of the preparations of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE), which plans to scale the mountain next year.

Butch Sebastian, who started forming the team with then Transportation Undersecretary Art Valdez in 2004, said the idea to climb Everest came up in 2003.

At that time, he said, the team organizers had two choices, the easier of which was to take the "commercial climb."

Mountaineers with experience in high-altitude ascents have the option of paying $70,000 each to climb professionals in Nepal for a guided climb of Everest.

In a commercial climb, ropes, clips and other equipment needed to reach the summit would be set up, and all the mountaineer would have to do is just "clip on and use the ropes."

"In other words, it's spoonfed," said Sebastian, previous president of the Federation of Philippine Mountaineers Association.

GARDUCE: I chose my own pace.

"We didn't want the commercial climb. We wanted an organized setup," he said.

Training climbs

Sebastian said the team wanted its members trained in climbs of various mountains in preparation for the assault on Everest.

It was agreed that during the training climbs, the team would decide which of its members would be the fittest to scale the world's highest mountain, he said.

The team's next training climb is on Mt. Denale in Alaska, said to be North America's tallest peak, Sebastian said.

The plan to scale Everest next year involves two teams of eight pushing toward the summit from two sides—one team coming from Tibet and the other from Nepal.

The teams will set off at the same time and meet at the summit to achieve the goal of a "unity climb," Sebastian said.

Three women are on the team. If they succeed in reaching the summit, they will be the first women from Southeast Asia to do so.

According to Sebastian, Garduce was invited to be part of the team but negotiations for his entry bogged down.

Sebastian said Garduce was asked to commit to a training schedule.

But "we could not commit to him that he would be the one to scale the summit," Sebastian said without elaborating.

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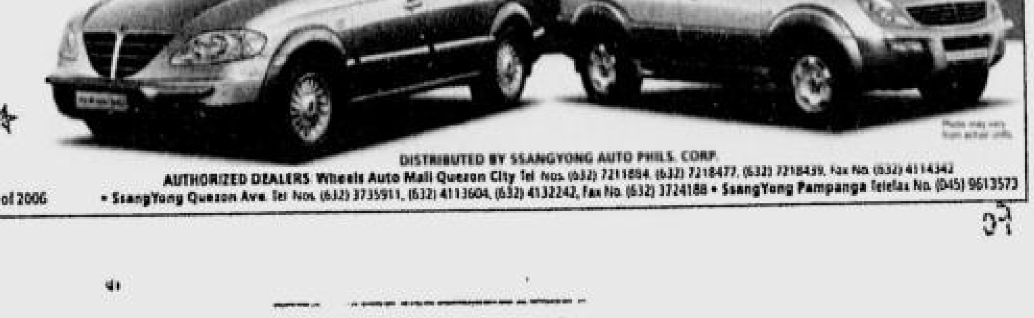

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Da Vinci movie: 'A thriller, not a historical document'

From page A1

Tatou), Langdon must evade shadowy elements of the Church's Opus Dei sect, who want the secret of the grail to remain secret.

The movie is directed by Ron Howard, a crowd-pleasing filmmaker who won a Best Director Oscar for "A Beautiful Mind." With such talents working on "The Da Vinci Code" in front of and behind the cameras, there was some hope that the film would intelligently handle the book's more sensitive aspects.

And so it has. The film Howard made is very faithful to the book, a handsome, gripping adaptation of the bestseller. Scriptwriter Akiva Goldsman does an impressive job retaining the essential points of the novel in the two-and-a-half-hour film.

Howard's direction is focused and intelligent, but not flawless. The scenes where Hanks is deciphering codes, showing words lighting up in his mind to catch his attention, are reminiscent of the director's own Oscar-winner "A Beautiful Mind," which employed the same technique.

Goose bumps

And a scene where Hanks and Tatou are about to be shot while in a van is confusingly edited, such that the audience is left wondering how they were saved.

The flashbacks showing the dawn of Christianity, however, are magnificently filmed, showing sweeping views of magnificent temples and hundreds of extras in exquisite costumes. And the final shot, which shows Hanks at the Louvre, will surely induce goose bumps.

As Howard has stated, his "Da Vinci Code" movie is a thriller, not a historical document. Its objective is to entertain moviegoers, not discredit Church teaching. And yet the Church has blasted the book and movie anyway, calling them blasphemous.

Among the more interesting concepts which didn't make it to the movie are a more detailed discussion of the Sacred Feminine, and the suggestion that Walt Disney himself was obsessed with Mary Magdalene, alluding to her in his animated movies.

Acting standout

The acting standout is McKellen as the grail expert who articulates the film's most controversial ideas. When he says lines like, "What if the greatest story ever told was a lie?" you can't help but listen.

As the code-decipherer Langdon, Hanks is fine but you can't help but wonder what a better-looking actor would have been like in the role (the book describes Langdon as looking like Harrison Ford).

In the pivotal role of Sophie, Tatou is serviceable but not particularly memorable. The best thing that can be said of her work here is that she shows no trace of the wide-eyed "Amelie," the role in the movie of the same name that made her an international star.

Brown's skills

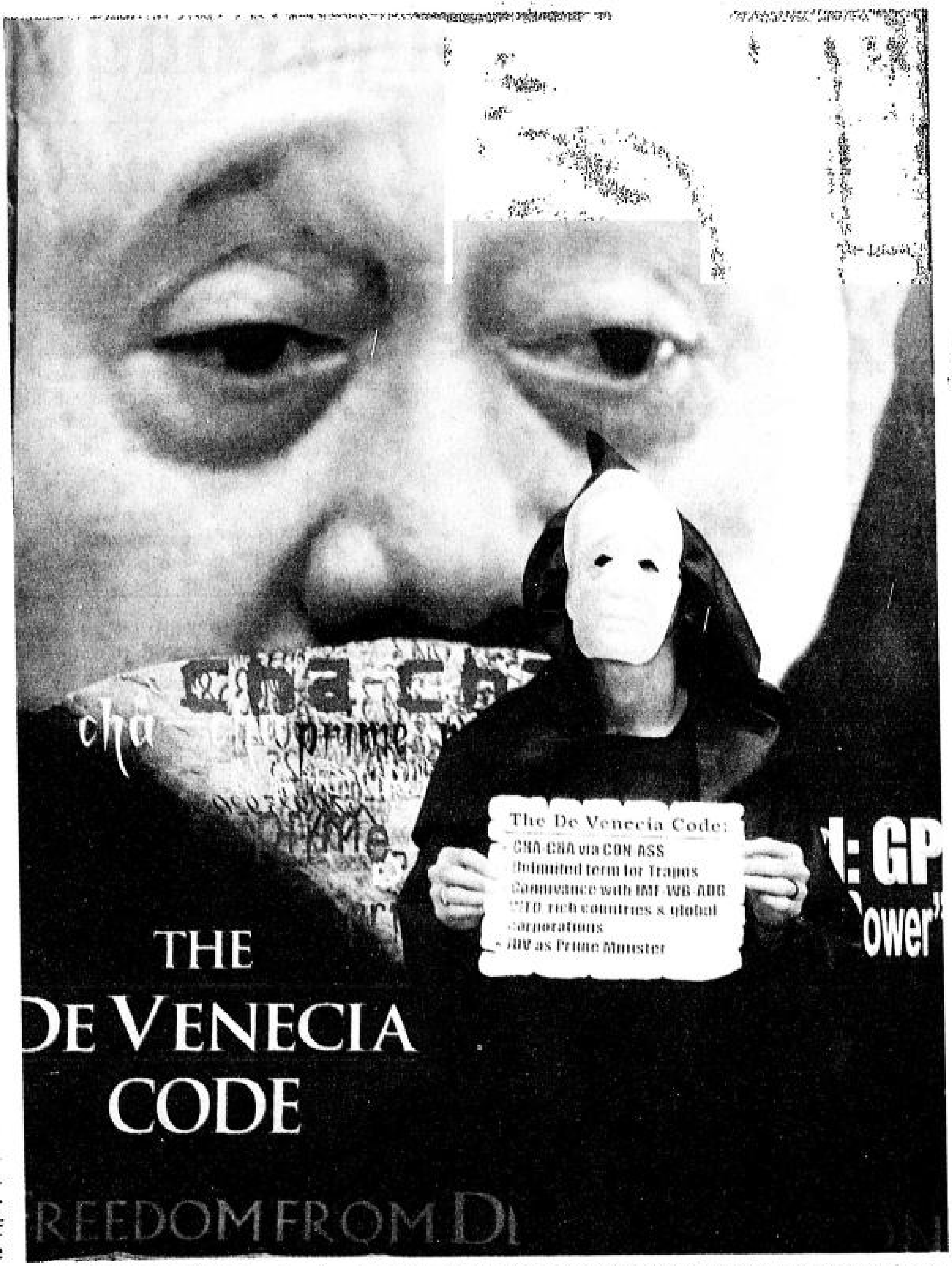
Why all the fuss over a fictional story? It's because Brown skillfully used real artwork, documents, buildings and people in his book, which has been read by an estimated 75 million people worldwide.

How could readers not think "The Da Vinci Code" was real, considering that Jesus Christ, Leonardo Da Vinci and Isaac Newton are as real as the Mona Lisa painting, the Louvre Museum and the Opus Dei?

It's because of Brown's wonderful interweave of art, history, and language that readers believe that the theories he presents in his book are real.

Yes, that does look like a woman to the left of Jesus Christ in Da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper. And yes, it does make sense that the Church would want to conceal word about Christ marrying Mary Magdalene and having a child with her, if such a thing happened.

Will "The Da Vinci Code" cause some Christians to question some of their beliefs? Definitely. Will they abandon their faith because of this movie? If they do, then they couldn't have been very good Catholics to begin with.



MOVIE IN RP POLITICS: Freedom from Debt Coalition rally in front of the Batasan Pambansa to protest the so-called "trapos'" subservience to the Palace-De Venecia-backed code on the Constituent Assembly. JOAN BONDOC

No shame in being called GMA lapdog but . . .

From page A1

a new opposition bid to impeach the President.

"I remain loyal to the President for as long as my loyalty jibes with my loyalty to my people. If it does not, I will remain loyal to my people," he said on Wednesday.

That loyalty to the President seemed to be unraveling after Cagas learned that Malacañang was considering removing a provision in the proposed 2006 national budget requiring consultations with district representatives before energy, agriculture and agrarian reform projects were implemented.

CAGAS feeling betrayed.

SUPLICO asked to name names.

Catastrophe

Cagas said during the House plenary session that deleting this provision would be a "catastrophe" for congressmen.

"You better wake up," he said. "Everything that we did in the last budget will go to the mayors and the governors ... I am afraid that my people will convince me to sign the impeachment if I cannot stop what is going to happen."

Cagas said that during the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council meeting in Malacañang on Monday, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda informed him that the Palace wanted the controversial provision removed.

This means that congressmen would be deprived of largesse from juicy infrastructure projects.

Betrayed

He said he felt "betrayed ... betrayed by this administration ... betrayed by the leadership of this House."

With this development, Cagas said that he would not hesitate in signing the impeachment complaint the opposition said it would refile when the next Congress session opens in July.

Last year, administration supporters in the House killed a similar move to unseat the President over allegations she stole the 2004 presidential election—a charge she has vehemently denied but does not go away.

On Wednesday, opposition House Deputy Minority Leader Rolex Suplico of Iloilo said disgruntled administration supporters were urging him to refile the impeachment complaint immediately, hoping the move would usher in an early Christmas.

Palace promises not kept

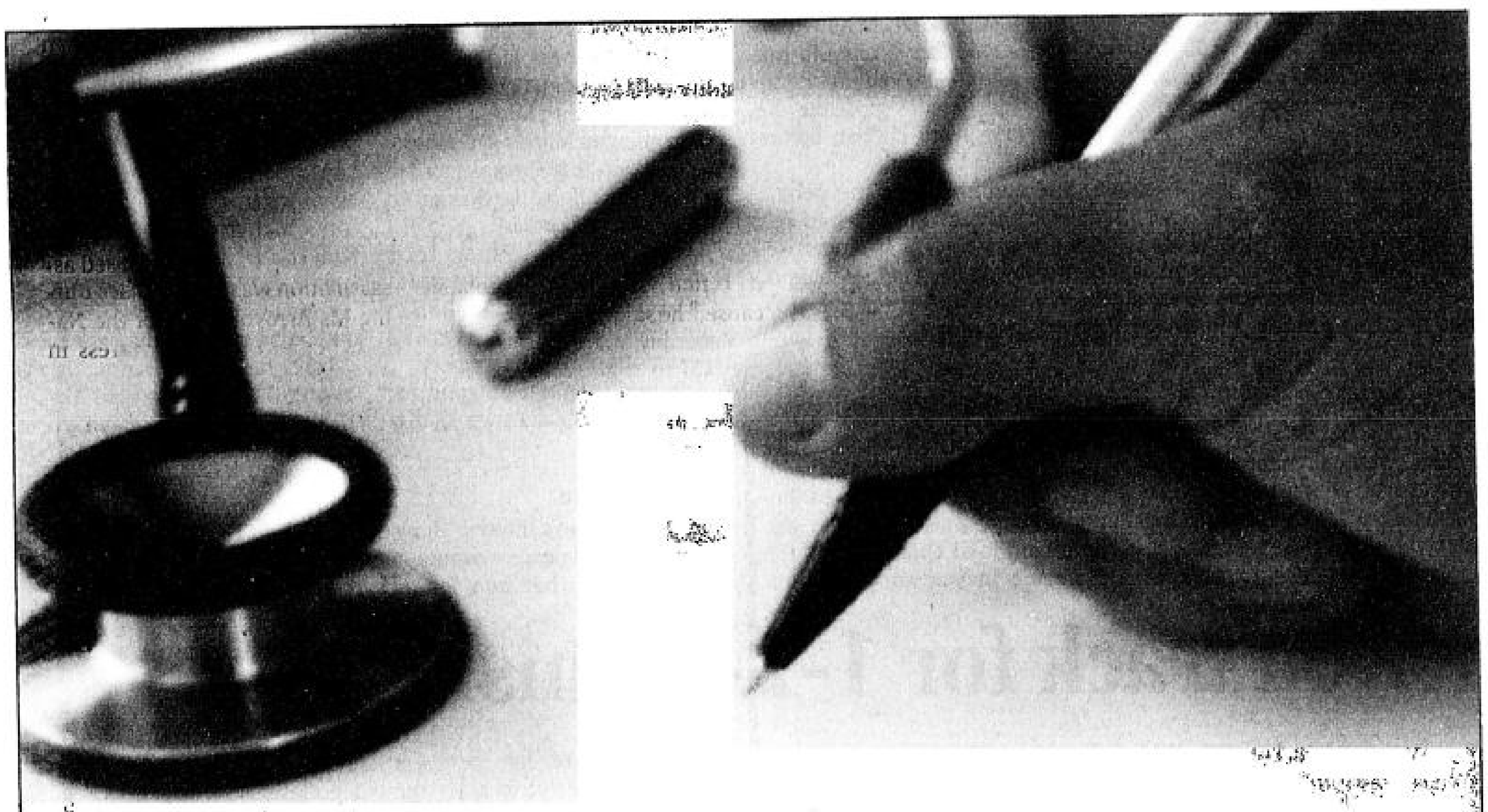
Suplico said cash, projects and appointments to government posts that the Palace reportedly promised in exchange for casting a no vote to the impeachment complaint last year had not materialized and had resulted in so much unhappiness.

Yesterday, Surigao Rep. Prospero Pichay challenged Suplico to name names. "We challenge him to put up or shut up."

Even so, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel advised the House opposition not to bother with another impeachment case against Ms Arroyo.

"Not because Gloria is not guilty. She is guilty of practically all violations of the Constitution and she should be impeached," Pimentel said.

"But considering the track record of the House, if we go into another round of impeachment, it will also be an opportunity for selling and buying of votes, so why go through that charade?" *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Juliet Labog-Javellana*



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City of Manila bans 'Da Vinci Code'

From page A1

married Mary Magdalene and fathered children whose descendants have survived to the present day has sparked accusations of blasphemy not only from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines but also from other Christian groups across the globe.

Earlier this week, however, the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) allowed the film to be shown but gave it an R-18 rating, meaning it is restricted to adults.

According to Valeriano, cinema owners in Manila who defy the ban face a one-year jail term and a P5,000 fine. Those caught selling pirated DVDs or VCDs of the movie could be jailed for up to six months and fined P3,000, he added.

City's sentiment

"This is the sentiment of the city of Manila," said Councilor Benjamin Asilo, a coauthor of the resolution.

"The film made erroneous and unsubstantiated claims against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity," Asilo said, adding that the people behind the movie "should not be allowed to enrich themselves at the expense of desecrating our religious institutions and impairing our relationship with our God."

Councilor Ma. Asuncion Fugoso (District 3), one of those who approved the resolution, said she was withholding judgment on the film.

"It's not for me to judge, I know it's just fiction, but why use the name of Christ?" Fugoso said.

Councilor Cita Astals opposed the resolution, saying that she was for freedom of expression. She described Brown's book as "excellent" so that "once you start reading it, you'll not put it down."

"If your faith is strong, any movie that depicts Jesus as Satan will not affect you. But if your faith is weak, any movie will not save you," Astals added.

Councilor Lourdes Isip-Garcia, who also opposed the ban, said the movie "is fiction, just for entertainment."

Not a sin

Fr. James Reuter, director of the Catholic Church's National Office of the Mass Media, said it wasn't a sin to see the movie.

"Rome, in general, has condemned it ... (But) the Holy Father has not made it a sin if you watch it," Reuter told the INQUIRER on Tuesday.

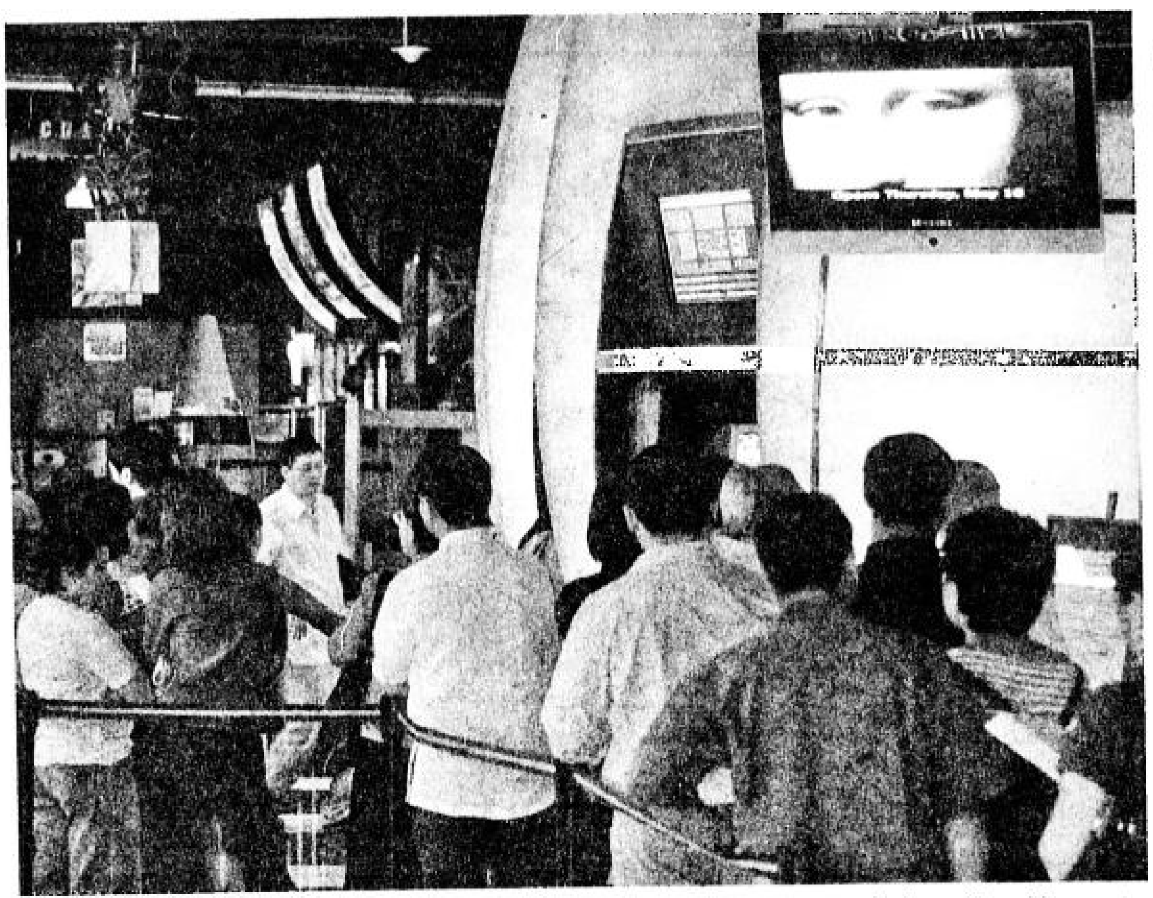
In France, director Ron Howard had a suggestion for people riled by the way Christian history was depicted in the movie: If you think the movie will upset you, don't go see it.

"There's no question that the film is likely to be upsetting to some people," Howard told reporters at the Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday. "My advice, since virtually no one has really seen the movie yet, is to not go see the movie if you think you're going to be upset. Wait. Talk to somebody who has seen it. Discuss it. And then arrive at an opinion about the movie itself."

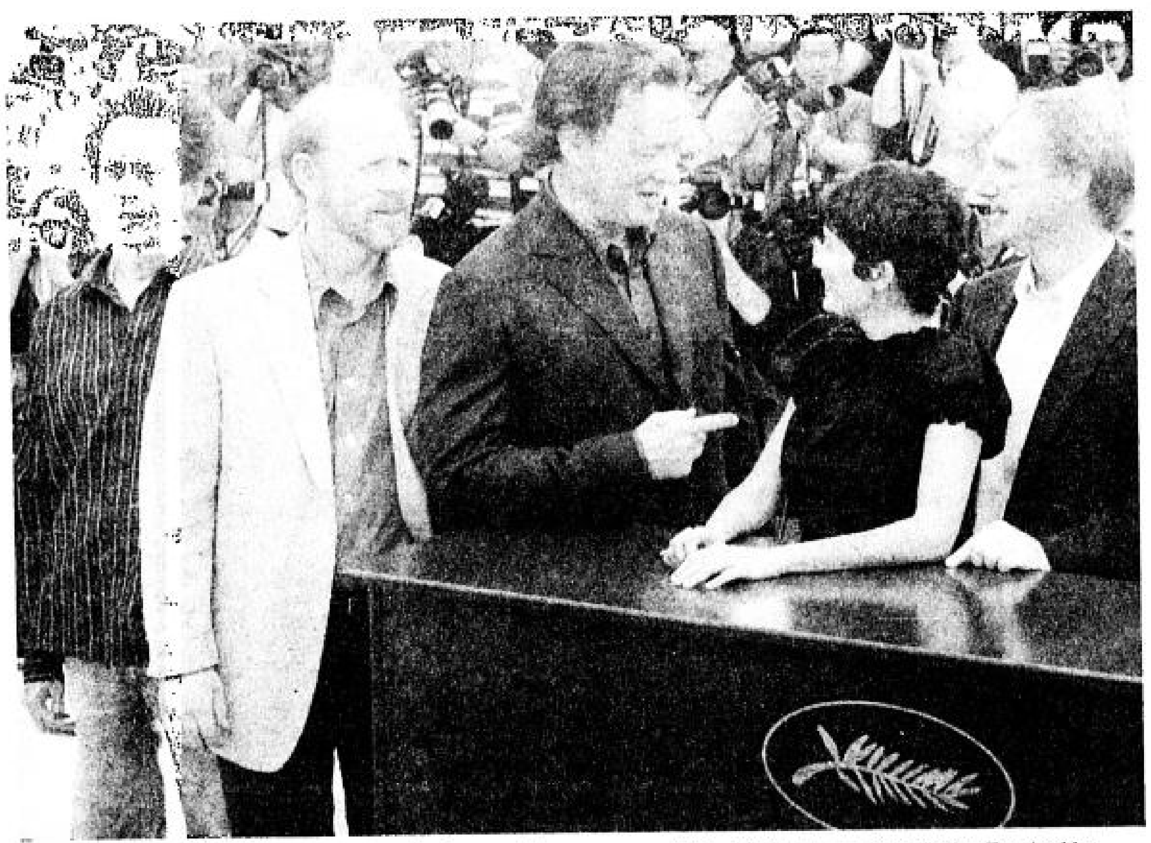
"Again: This is supposed to be entertainment, it's not theology," he said.

The movie suggests that Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene and fathered a child. One reporter asked the cast if they believed Christ was married.

Star Tom Hanks quipped, "Well, I wasn't around." *With reports from Nikko Dizon and AP*



LIVING UP TO ITS PUBLICITY: "Da Vinci" opens to the expected long lines at the box office, this one at Rockwell in Makati City, with a lot of thanks to the controversy. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



THE "DA VINCI" STARS behind and in front of the cameras at the 59th International Film Festival in Cannes, France, on Wednesday. "Da Vinci" opened across the globe on Thursday. From left, producer Brian Grazer, director Ron Howard, actors Tom Hanks and Audrey Tatou and author Dan Brown. AP

Time mag writer placed on government watch list

From page A1

magazine indicating that a group of military and civilian personalities were planning to "withdraw support" from Ms Arroyo to jump-start an uprising.

Among those in the supposed meeting were Council of Philippine Affairs convenor Pastor "Boy" Saycon and former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, now president of the Philippine Olympic Committee and Ms Arroyo's adviser on food security.

Both Saycon and Cojuangco have denied the report.

Sindayen's testimony is key to unmasking those behind the failed coup, Gonzalez said. But he expressed fears that the journalist might flee the country rather than answer a summons from the National Bureau of Investigation.

"She won't be arrested, but she must cooperate. We're not asking for anything except for the truth. We just want to talk to her," Gonzalez said in an interview.

According to the Time report, Sindayen witnessed the meeting at Cojuangco's house, "where plans were being hatched for what one of the ringleaders called a 'withdrawal of support' from President Arroyo."

"More than a dozen middle-level officials and businessmen were at the meeting, which went well past one in the morning," the report said.

3 gov't execs involved

Gonzalez's order to include Sindayen in the BI watch list came amid a supposed "breakthrough" in the NBI investigation.

Three middle-ranking government officials have been found to be involved in the destabilization try, Gonzalez said. He refused to identify the three officials, but he admitted that they were from the executive branch.

"The NBI report is not completed. We want to know why they were in that meeting. We will file charges against these individuals if I find that there's probable cause," he said.

Yesterday, Gonzalez ordered the NBI to step up its investigation. Sindayen's testimony, he said, would help the bureau fill in the gaps in its report on the alleged coup attempt to the DOJ.

The secretary said Cojuangco was not yet off the hook despite the fact that no charges had been lodged against him by the government.

Gonzalez said he also wanted to know why the group of alleged conspirators would invite an international media member in carrying out their plans to overthrow the Arroyo administration.

"For what purpose? They must be quite certain that the government would fall that night," he said.

Standing by story

The NBI had earlier invited Saycon, Cojuangco and Sindayen for questioning regarding the Time article. Sindayen instead submitted a letter through a lawyer, saying that she was standing by her story.

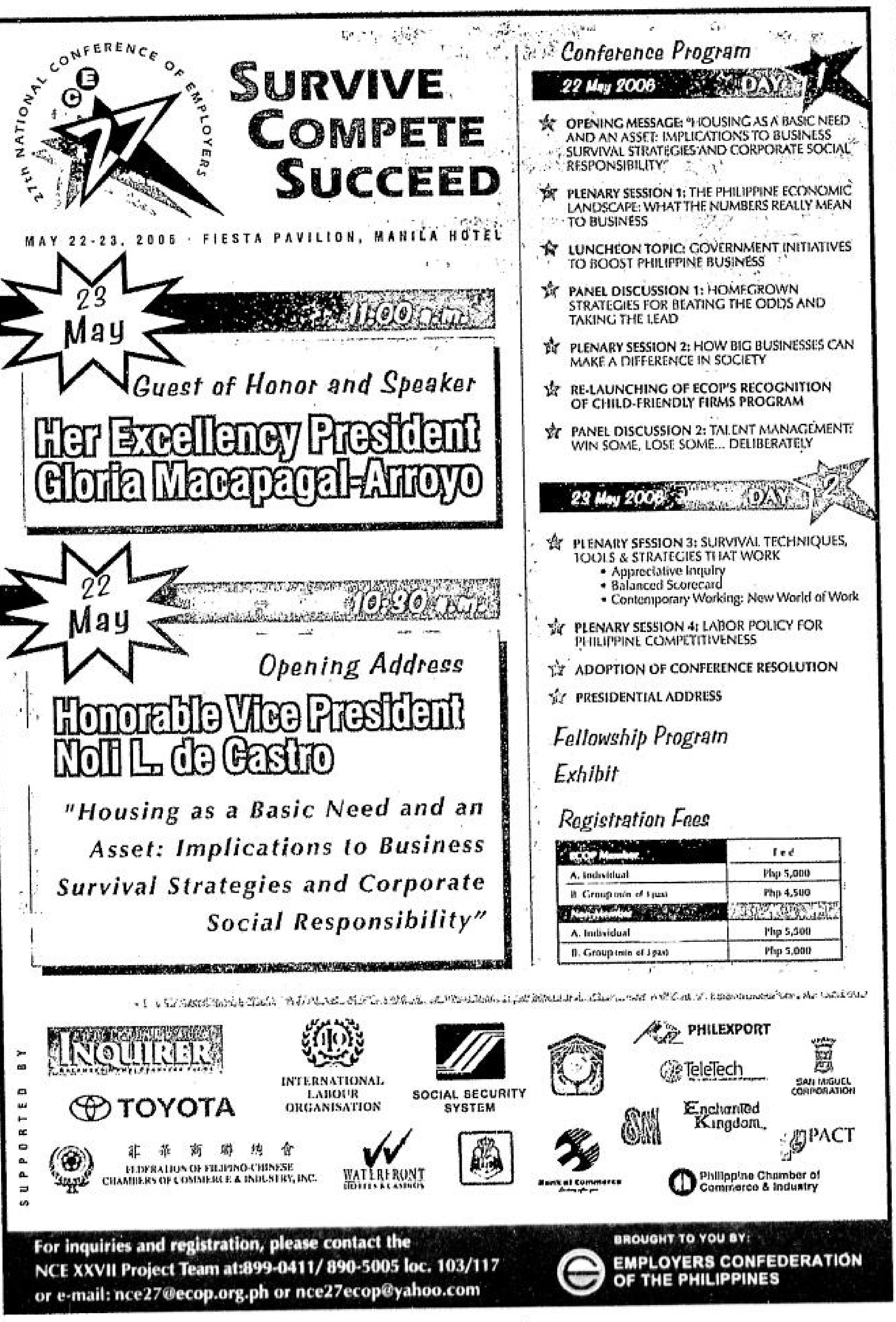
Saycon and Cojuangco have said no meeting ever took place at the latter's house. They claimed, however, that they discussed preparations for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Edsa I to be held the following day.

Assassination plot

In the same interview yesterday, Gonzalez disclosed an alleged plan by leftist groups to assassinate him and the President, citing intelligence reports of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Nica) through National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

"This is a serious threat. He (Gonzales) alerted me last week during a Nica meeting in Quezon City. That's why (Director) General (Arturo) Lomibao provided me with a bullet-proof car. I've been using it since last month. You have to be fatalistic," he said. Lomibao heads the Philippine National Police.

Gonzalez said the supposed assassination was to take place during Ms Arroyo's State of the Nation Address before Congress in July.



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- PLENARY SESSION 1: THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE: WHAT THE NUMBERS REALLY MEAN TO BUSINESS
- LUNCHEON TOPIC: GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO BOOST PHILIPPINE BUSINESS
- PANEL DISCUSSION 1: HOMEGROWN STRATEGIES FOR BEATING THE ODDS AND TAKING THE LEAD
- PLENARY SESSION 2: HOW BIG BUSINESSES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOCIETY
- RE-LAUNCHING OF ECOP'S RECOGNITION OF CHILD-FRIENDLY FIRMS PROGRAM
- PANEL DISCUSSION 2: TALENT MANAGEMENT: WIN SOME, LOSE SOME... DELIBERATELY

23 May 2006 DAY 2

- PLENARY SESSION 3: SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES, TOOLS & STRATEGIES THAT WORK
  - Appreciative Inquiry
  - Balanced Scorecard
  - Contemporary Working: New World of Work
- PLENARY SESSION 4: LABOR POLICY FOR PHILIPPINE COMPETITIVENESS
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Adopting Further Amendments to the WESM Rules

Whereas, Rule 8.6.1 of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) Rules provide for the approval by the Department of Energy (DOE) of proposals for any WESM rules changes upon endorsement by the PEM Board;

Whereas, on December 20, 2005, the Interim Rules Change Committee has approved a resolution endorsing for approval before the PEM Board changes in the WESM Rules pertaining to the provisions on the over-riding constraints and the determination of market prices;

Whereas, after discussion, the PEM Board has resolved on January 19, 2006 to approve for endorsement to the Department of Energy (DOE) the abovestated changes to the WESM Rules;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to its authority under the WESM Rules, the DOE hereby issues, adopts and promulgates the following amendments to the WESM Rules.

A. Amendments to the WESM Rules

1. Rule 3.5.13.1 is amended to read -

   Subject to clause 3.5.13.3, the *System Operator* may require the *Market Operator* to impose constraints on the power flow, demand, *energy generation* of a specific facility in the Grid to address system security threat, to mitigate the effects of a system emergency, or to address the need to dispatch generating units to comply with systems, regulatory and commercial tests requirements. The *System Operator* may also relax existing constraints or system requirements on power flows, demand, energy generation and reserves if the *Market Operator* is unable to produce a feasible dispatch schedule.

   The *System Operator*, in consultation with the *Market Operator* and the *Trading Participants*, shall develop the criteria and procedures for dispatch of generating units that are required to run as a result of the imposition or relaxation of constraints stated in the preceding paragraph, and the manner for compensating said units.

2. Rule 3.5.13.2 is amended to read -

   In situations where offers are structured in such a way that provision of any level of *reserve* services prohibits the simultaneous provision of very low or high levels of *generation*, the *System Operator* may also recommend to the *Market Operator* that constraints should be imposed or relaxed so as to allow *generating systems* to operate in a range which allows increase of either *reserve* allocation or energy *generation*, as appropriate, having regard to:

   (a) The commercial interests of *Trading Participants*; and

   (b) Market priorities and objectives, as reflected by the relevant *market prices* for energy and *reserves* in the relevant *reserve region*.

3. Rule 3.10.5 is amended to read -

   In the event where no ex-ante prices can be determined or communicated within the timeframe specified by the timetable, or the calculated prices are believed to be in error, as a result of load shedding, occurrence of constraint violation coefficients, or for any other reason:

   (a) The Market Operator may, as soon as possible after the end of a trading interval, issue a pricing error notice, in which case, the ex-post quantities and the ex post prices determined according to clause 3.10.7 shall also serve as ex-ante quantities and ex-ante prices. If no ex-post prices can be determined or the calculated prices are believed to be in error as a result of the imposition or relaxation of constraints pursuant to clause 3.5.13.1, the *Market Operator* shall re-run the *Market Dispatch Optimization Model*.

B. Effectivity

These amendments shall be effective fifteen (15) days following its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

(Sgd) Raphael P. M. Lotilla
Secretary

Metro Manila, Philippines, May 5, 2006

(PDI–May 19, 2006)

NEWS

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Pinay convicted in Singapore chop-chop slay

PHILIPPINE Ambassador to Singapore Belen Fule-Anota (center) with Edwin Aguilar, husband of Guen Aguilar, leave the Supreme Court. AFP

SINGAPORE—A FILIPINA maid was convicted Thursday of culpable homicide not amounting to murder for the killing of a fellow domestic worker whose head and limbs were found in a smart Singapore shopping area.

Guen Aguilar, 30, escaped the death penalty for killing and chopping up 27-year-old compatriot Jane La Puebla when her murder charge was reduced due to her mental state.

"In the circumstances, I convict you of the charge you face," said High Court Judge V.K. Rajah.

Sentencing was set for May 29. Aguilar faces possible life imprisonment or a jail term of up to 10 years.

But lead defense lawyer Shashi Nathan argued for a sentence of less than 10 years, citing Aguilar's mental state at the time of the killing and her remorse during the seven months she has been in prison.

"We make our strongest submission to your honor that Guen certainly does not deserve a life sentence," Nathan told the judge.

No excuse

"She knows that what she did was wrong and that there is no excuse for her misdeeds. However, she is genuinely remorseful for what she has done."

A letter from Roque Versoza, the mayor of Aguilar's northern Philippine home town of Tagudin, was also read in court.

The letter appealed on humanitarian grounds for Aguilar to be spared a long prison sentence. It said her two sons in the Philippines were unaware their mother is in prison and think she is still working as a maid.

Aguilar, wearing an orange prison suit, looked somber and tearful as the verdict was read out. Her husband, Edwin, and sister, Joy, were among those in the court along with Philippine Embassy officials and the mayor.

She was arrested hours after the severed head and limbs of La Puebla were found in a sports bag in the upmarket Orchard Road area on Sept. 9. The victim's torso was later discovered at a nature park.

Fight over money

Court documents showed that the two had an argument inside Aguilar's room at her employers' flat over 2,000 Singapore dollars (1,274 US) she had lent the victim, part of which was borrowed from a loan shark.

It escalated into a fight during which Aguilar covered La Puebla's face with a cushion until she became unconscious. She then strangled her and placed the body inside a luggage bag.

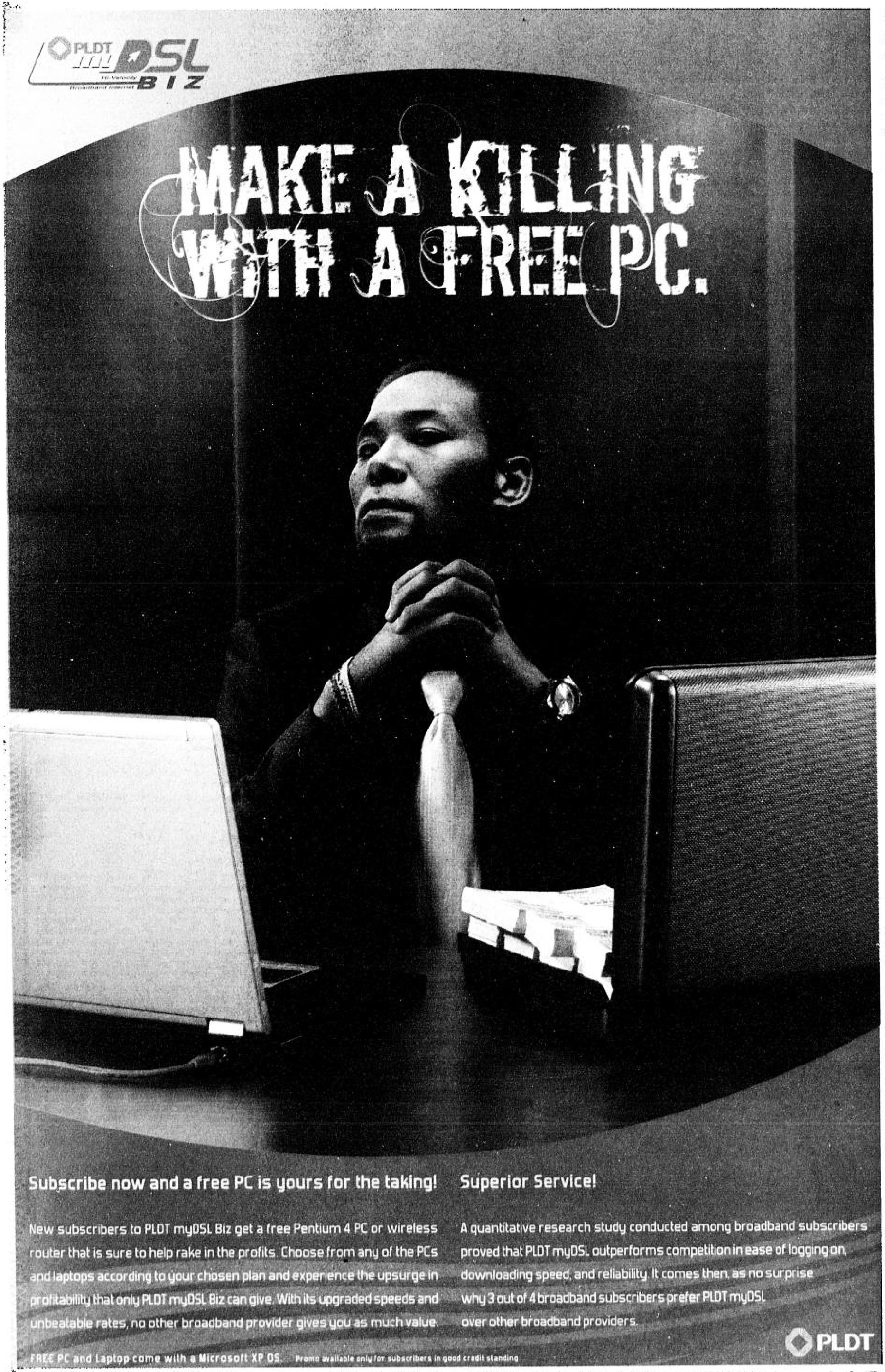
Two days later, on Sept. 9, she bought gloves, a chopper and an axe, cut the body into pieces and made two separate trips on a taxi to dispose of them. Her employers were out when the crime took place.

Consultant psychiatrist Tommy Tan told the court Thursday that Aguilar was suffering from "masked depression" which "substantially impaired her mental responsibility" at the time of the killing.

Tan also said there was a low risk of her re-offending.

In 1995 Filipina maid Flor Contemplacion was hanged for the murder of another maid and a Singaporean boy, straining ties which have since improved.

About 150,000 women, many of them from impoverished villages in the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, work as maids in Singapore. *AFP*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NCRPO CHIEF Vidal Querol (right) with MPD Chief Pedro Bulaong at Divisoria market to monitor security measures in the area. REM ZAMORA

SAY GOODBYE to long lines with new electronic payment ticketing scheme for commuters on the MRT and LRT. PDI FILE PHOTO

DOTC eyes E-payment for commuter trains

Tickets may be bought through mobile phone

By Daxim I. Lucas

LONG, INCONVENIENT LINES at the terminals of Metro Manila's commuter rail services may soon be a thing of the past after the transportation department unveiled a plan to adopt electronic payment ticketing schemes.

If adopted, commuters may soon be able to buy tickets on the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and the Light Rail Transit (LRT) using their mobile phones, Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) Assistant Secretary Roberto R. Castañares said.

The new scheme is on top of an ongoing DOTC project to implement a unified ticketing scheme for Metro Manila's three different commuter train lines.

"We are working out a system that will allow passengers to purchase tickets through their cell phones," Castañares said. "This system will automatically debit their Smart Cash or G-Cash or their savings accounts so they don't have to wait in long lines when buying tickets."

A similar system is already being used by rail authorities in Hong Kong where passengers use cards that can be read by radio signals by simply putting them near the card readers.

The smart cards can be "reloaded" through bank accounts, through the Internet, or with mobile phone payment schemes.

Castañares said the DOTC is "seriously considering" the proposal, adding that it is even better and more efficient than the existing program to unify the ticketing systems being undertaken by the French consultancy firm Systra.

"The Systra study is still ongoing and there's no conflict with the present system," he said.

Calls for a more efficient ticketing system have grown louder as the numbers of commuters using the MRT and LRT systems increase, prompted in part by rising gas prices.

This trend is especially evident on the MRT's Line-3—known as the Metrostar Express—which traverses the length of Edsa, Metro Manila's main artery.

During the first quarter of 2006, a total of 34.2 million commuters took the MRT-3, data from the company showed. This represents an 11.2-percent increase in the number of riders from the 30.2 million who used the service during the same period last year.

According to the Light Rail Transit Authority, on the other hand, 40.1 million commuters rode its two train lines during the first three months of 2006. This represents an 18.2-percent increase over the 33.8 million passengers that it ferried during the same period last year.

During the morning and evening rush hours, it can take up to 15 minutes for commuters to buy tickets owing to the long lines.

The transportation department has already sealed a deal with the city government of Vienna, Austria, which will donate 48 second-hand trains to the Philippines for the MRT's expansion program.

A safer Divisoria welcomes shoppers

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT (MPD) and the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce yesterday launched its "Safe Ka sa Divisoria" program in an effort to provide assistance and security to thousands of students shopping for school supplies.

Beginnings

"The program was first introduced in December in time for the holiday rush," MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said in a statement.

Support

Bulaong said they have the full support of the Filipino-Chinese community, led by the federation's president Francis Chua, who agreed to be their partners in upholding peace and order in one of the top shopping destinations of Metro Manila.

"Shoppers are again expected to flock to Divisoria before the opening of classes, and we have to be ready to protect them from petty criminals," Bulaong said.

The police chief added, "The Filipino-Chinese community and the Divisoria Vendors Association are very receptive to the enhanced safety measures."

More men

As part of the improved safety measures, the MPD would deploy additional policemen and "sekretas" (plainclothes policemen) to prevent the possible resurgence of pickpockets and snatchers in the area's markets and malls, Bulaong said.

Assistance center

The MPD official added that the district would also set up a police assistance and information center in the heart of Divisoria to handle complaints from victims of petty crimes.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **4 nabbed in marijuana buy-bust raid** /A27

■ **Suspected carjack gang members charged in QC** /A26

■ **2 jail guards linked to journalist's slay** /A26

Baclaran centennial: From fishing village to trading hub

By Dulce F. Baybay
Contributor

FOR 12 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN days a week, Norma Sandoval, 57, is at her small sidewalk stall on Redemptorist Road, Baclaran, Parañaque City. She sells religious images from Pampanga, Paete (Laguna) and Bulacan.

Occupying this spot for the past 28 years, Sandoval, a widow, has been able to send her two children to school with her earnings. Her girl is now married while her son finished commerce, major in computer management.

As president of the Federation of Baclaran Vendors consisting of more than a thousand members, Sandoval says on Wednesdays, the number of vendors in Baclaran reach as high as 2,000, many of them ambulant. They come from Quezon Province, Batangas, Cavite, Pateros, Marikina, Taytay and Divisoria, and even as far away as Iloilo.

One fourth of this number are Muslims who come from as far as Zamboanga, though many are already staying on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City. The Muslims have set up their own cooperative, its members also including Christians, to undertake projects to help Barangay Baclaran.

Goods sold include slippers, dresses (local and imported from Korea, Thailand, China), shoes, food and fish.

Regular vendors pay no rent for their space except for what is known as *arkabala* or ticket costing P5 a day that goes to the barangay treasury to be spent for projects like keeping the area clean.

"We are not waiting for dole-outs from the government," says Sandoval. "We are entrepreneurs in our own simple way. I became a vendor in 1978 (when I arrived from) Bacolod to look for a job here. I used to have a store on the second floor of a building but I was not earning. No one would go up to buy from us. *Ito lang ang paraan para kami mabuhay.*"

STA. RITA de Cascia's feast day is marked on the third Sunday of May. RODEL ROTONI

She adds that many of their members have prospered and several have children abroad.

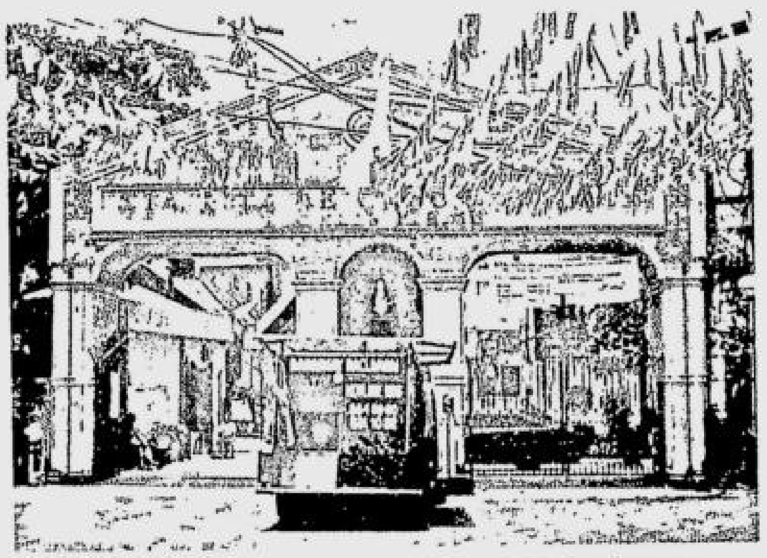
Barangay Councilor Florentino "Ato" Celeridad, 62, says they prioritize giving of space to residents of Baclaran. A long-time public servant, spending the past 27 years in the barangay as *kagawad* and even barangay officer-in-charge at one time, he says many of the vendors donate to both the Baclaran parish of Sta. Rita de Cascia and the Redemptorist Church.

The so-called underground economy of Baclaran, says Celeridad, has helped advance the development of Baclaran.

This year, Baclareños are celebrating the centennial of the parish of Baclaran named after its patroness, Sta. Rita de Cascia, the saint of impossible cases. Her fiesta is celebrated third Sunday of May.

Founded in 1906, Sta. Rita de Cascia was the first parish to separate from the centuries old St. Andrew Parish in La Huerta, Parañaque. It is on Quirino Avenue, in an area that used to be a cockpit but now transformed into a sacred site.

For its 100th anniversary, the parish has chosen the theme "We remember, we celebrate, we believe." In cooperation with Barangay Baclaran's officials, led by chair Rolando Cailles, it has embarked on several projects, including a contest for the most attractive arch made of bamboo. After all, the name Baclaran came from *baklad*.



ENTRANCE arch leading to Sta. Rita de Cascia parish church. RODEL ROTONI

According to folk tales, the area on the shores of Manila Bay used to be a thriving fishing village. Fishermen from the neighboring towns of Bacoor, Imus, Tanza, Binakayan in the province of Cavite; and those from Malibay, Pildera, Mabong and Maricaban migrated to Baclaran, transforming the area into a bustling fish trade hub.

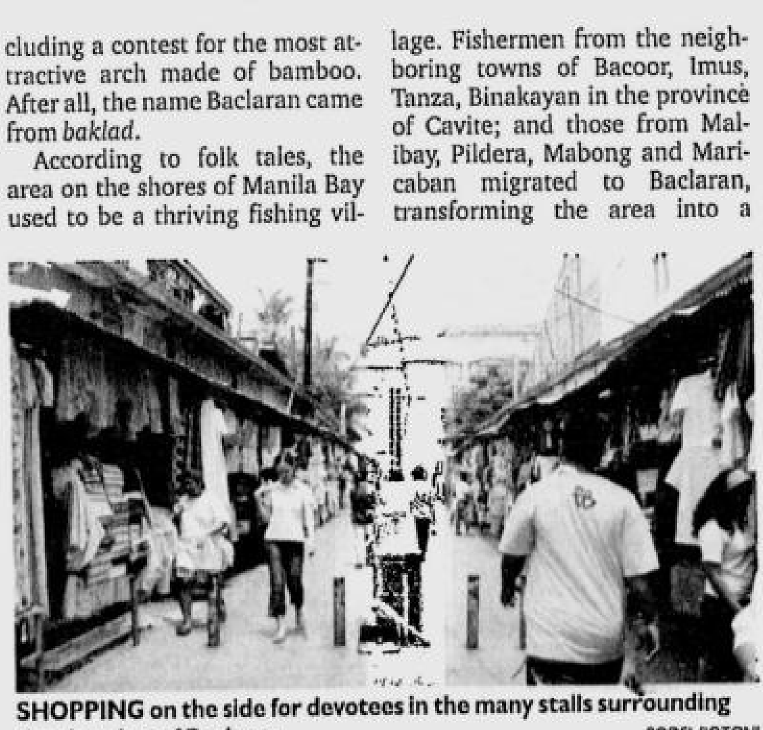
In the early 1900s, the place was filled with bamboo groves or *kawayanan*, providing the *kawayan* for making *baklad* or fish traps. Fishermen harvested fish daily and sold them in the nearest market.

People started calling the place *bakladan*, or the fishermen's village." Eventually, the "d" would be replaced by the "r", hence, Baclaran.

Due to its strategic location, Baclaran became a transit point for those coming from Southern and Northern Luzon, a melting pot for commerce, especially bargain hunters. It also attracted religious devotees especially after World War II when the novena to the Perpetual Help at the Redemptorist Church became popular (even overshadowing the parish church of Sta. Rita de Cascia). The devotion to the Perpetual Help is said to be the biggest Marian devotion in Asia, attracting people from all over the archipelago. Regardless of time of day or night, a visitor to Baclaran will see vendors plying their trade; commuters getting off and on buses, jeepneys, tricyles, taxis; a bustling place that never seems to sleep.

Peace and order is a priority. Volunteer members of Patrol 117 and Task Force 207 are always visible, making sure petty crimes like cell phone snatching and molestation do not occur.

From a fishermen's village to a bustling district, Barangay Baclaran has become a principal business area of the city of Parañaque.



SHOPPING on the side for devotees in the many stalls surrounding the churches of Baclaran. RODEL ROTONI

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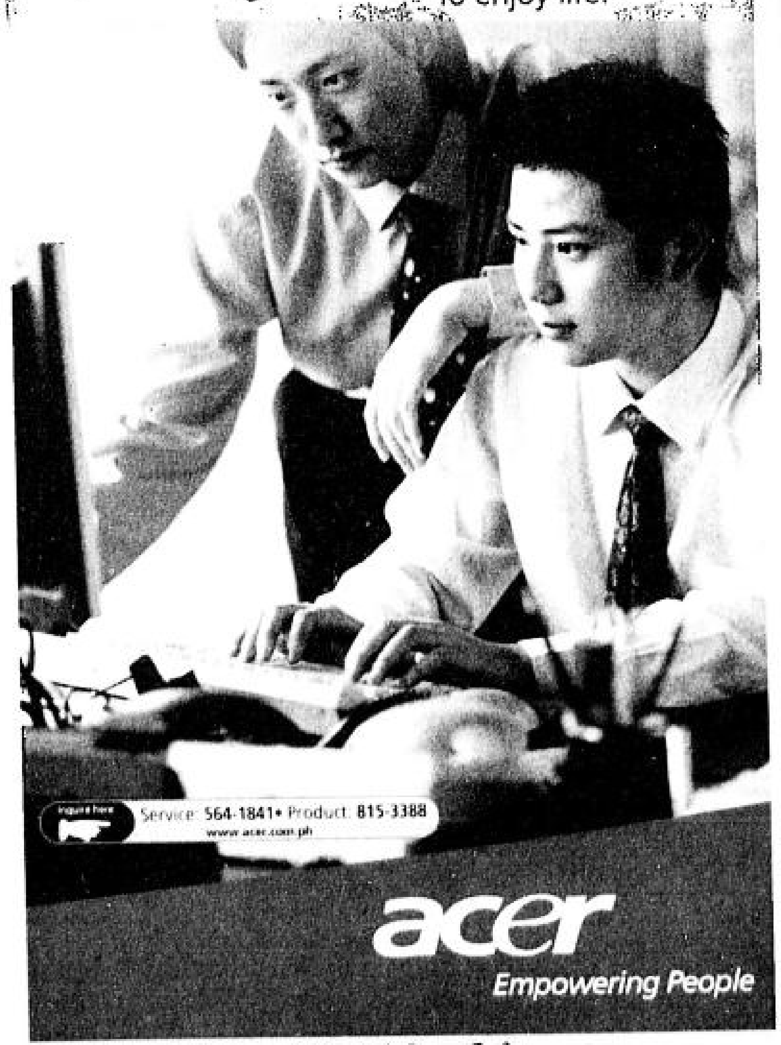

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

DOST Administrative Order No. 002
Series of 2006

SUBJECT : Guidelines in the Recovery of Costs of Products and Services of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical And Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) Particularly in the Flight Folder Issuance and the Fee Structure Thereof

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines is a signatory to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, ICAO Document No. 7300, otherwise known as the *Chicago Convention*, to further enhance agreement on certain principles and arrangements in order that international civil aviation may be developed in a safe and orderly manner and that international air transport services may be established on the basis of equality of opportunity and operated soundly and economically;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a Member country of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and a Contracting State of the Convention on International Civil Aviation which designated the PAGASA as the Designated Meteorological Authority (DMA) of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines primarily taking charge to arrange for the provision of meteorological service for international air navigation on its behalf;

WHEREAS, various principles and methodologies are laid out in the ICAO and WMO guidance materials on cost recovery, namely: Manual on Air Navigation Service Economics (ICAO Doc. 9161), ICAO's Policies on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services (ICAO Doc. 9082) and WMO Guide on Aeronautical Meteorological Services Cost Recovery (WMO No. 904);

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 159, it is the goal of the government: (1) to promote full recovery of cost of services to free other government revenues for priority projects; and (2) to ensure equitable distribution of the burden of cost recovery by having the direct recipients of government services account for the costs;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 54, Chapter 12, Book IV of Executive Order No. 292 (Administrative Code of 1987), heads of bureaus, offices or agencies, may, upon approval of the department head, charge and collect the cost of the services rendered by the bureau, office or agency concerned;

WHEREFORE, pursuant to the provisions of the issuances, the following rules and regulations for the implementation of collection of fees and charges for PAGASA products and services are hereby promulgated.

PART I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Title. These guidelines shall be known and cited as the PAGASA Flight Folder Issuance Fee Structure.

Section 2. Definition of terms and acronyms. - Unless defined otherwise, the following terms and acronyms shall refer to the definitions provided hereunder:

a. "PAGASA" refers to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration. A service institute of the Department of Science and Technology mandated to undertake, *inter alia*, observation, collection, assessment and processing of atmospheric and allied data for the benefit of agriculture, commerce and industry.

b. "AMSO" refers to the Aeronautical Meteorological Service Office (or AeroMeteorological Service Office). An organic unit of the Weather Forecasting Section-Weather Branch mandated by law to issue Flight Documentation Folders to aeronautical users.

c. "WMO" refers to the World Meteorological Organization. A specialized agency of the United Nations purposely established to further the application of meteorology to aviation, shipping, water resources management, agriculture and other human activities, among others.

d. "ICAO" refers to the International Civil Aviation Organization. A specialized agency of the United Nations established to standardize, and establish International Standards, Recommended Practices and Procedures covering the technical field of aviation: licensing of personnel, rules of the air, aeronautical meteorology, and aeronautical charts, among others.

e. "DMA" refers to the Designated Meteorological Authority. The authority providing or arranging for the provision of meteorological service for international air navigation on behalf of a Member country. DMA is functionally referred to as "Service Provider".

f. "FOLDER" refers to the Flight Documentation Folder. It consists of written or printed documents, including charts or forms containing meteorological information for a flight.

g. "USER" refers to an entity or individual that utilizes a service furnished by the "Service Provider".

h. "FEES" refers to all charges and costs assessed against the direct recipients of specialized products and services provided by PAGASA in the exercise of its functions.

i. "AerIS" refers to AeroMeteorological Information System which is a sub-system of the WAFS-Meteorological Laboratory.

j. "PAGASA AerIS" refers to PAGASA's aeronautical meteorological information system developed through WAFS-MetLab.

k. "SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR" refers to one who, as a primary job function, manages computer and network systems on behalf of another, such as an employer or client.

l. "FL" refers to flight level.

m. "hPa" refers to hecto-Pascal. A unit of measurement of atmospheric pressure.

n. "ETOPS" refers to Extended Range Operation with two engine airplanes.

o. "AERODROME" refers to a defined area on land, ice, or water (including any buildings, installations or equipment) intended to be used either wholly or partially for the arrival, departure; movement, or servicing of aircraft.

p. "ALTERNATE AERODROME" An aerodrome specified in the flight plan to which a flight may proceed when it becomes inadvisable to land at the aerodrome of intended landing

q. "EN-ROUTE ALTERNATE AERODROME" refers to an aerodrome at which an aircraft would be able to land after experiencing an abnormal or emergency condition while en route.

r. "AERODROME OF DESTINATION" refers to an aerodrome at which an aircraft is designated to land.

s. "SARPs" refers to standards and recommended practices employed by both the ICAO and WMO.

t. "PROGNOSTIC UPPER-AIR CHARTS" refers to prognosticated ICAO standard isobaric upper-level charts composed mainly of forecast air-temperature, wind direction and speed usually with validity period of six (6) to thirty six (36) hours.

u. "SIGNIFICANT WEATHER CHARTS" refers to prognosticated weather charts for a designated level usually at FL250-630. It may contain forecasts of: cloud areas with indication of its tops; jet streams at different levels, volcanic activity/ash extent and location, frontal systems and its direction and speed and other meteorological information which may affect the safety of aircraft operations.

v. "WAFS" refers to the World Area Forecast System developed by ICAO and WMO to improve the quality and consistency of en-route guidance provided for international aircraft operations.

w. "TAFOR" refers to the complete description of the meteorological elements expected at and over the aerodrome throughout the whole of the forecast period, it could be in a 9 or 24-hour validity period, including any changes considered to the significant to aircraft operations. It is prepared by trained staff (aeronautical meteorological forecaster), who, using the latest available regulations, ensure that internationally agreed practices are followed. This is one of the basic aeronautical meteorological information needed in flight planning for safety of the conduct of international or national air navigation.

x. "METAR" refers to the name code for an aviation routine weather report. In the Philippines, it is issued at hourly intervals. This type of report is one of the basic considerations in the formulation of a TAFOR.

y. "SPECI" refers to the name of the code for an aviation special weather report. A SPECI can be issued at any time when certain criteria are met. (see Appendix A)". This type of report is also one of the basic considerations in the formulation of a TAFOR"

z. "Service Provider" refers to PAGASA, as an entity that provides meteorological information to various users or customers."

aa. "Meteorological Information" refers to meteorological report, analysis, forecast, and any other statement relating to existing or expected meteorological conditions.

Section 3. Electronic Flight Folder Acquisition. Automated Flight Folder Issuances shall be in place and shall be maintained by the PAGASA AerIS Systems Administrator utilizing its FTP service. Authorized Users shall be given a username and password to gain access to the necessary Folder.

Section 4. Folder Preparation and Formulation. The Folder shall be prepared and formulated in advance by the AMSO throughout the 24-hour period.

Section 5. Folder Availability. The designated Forecaster shall post the latest Folder at the designated PAGASA website two (2) to three (3) hours prior to the intended time of departure.

Section 6. Flight Schedule; contents. The User shall be responsible for the submission of the frequency of Folder issuance (daily, weekly or monthly) within a period of seven (7) working days prior to the effectivity of the schedule. The flight schedule shall contain the (a) time of departure; (b) aerodrome of departure; (c) alternate aerodrome (including take-off alternate, en-route alternate, ETOPS en-route alternate); and (d) aerodrome of destination.

Section 7. Unscheduled, Re-scheduled and Cancelled Flights Requests for flight Folder outside the submitted schedule or for re-scheduled flights must be made at least twelve (12) hours before the intended time of departure.

Section 8. Folder Structure. The general structure of a flight documentation folder must be made in accordance with the standard format prescribed in the WMO and ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices. It is categorized into International Flight Folder; and Domestic Flight Folder.

International Flight Folder shall be composed of the following items

a. Multi-level prognostic upper-air charts, i.e. FL300 and FL390, with validity period of twenty four (24) hours or more;
b. Significant Weather Chart, i.e. FL250 - 630, with a validity period of twelve (12) hours;
c. Compiled list of Terminal Aerodrome Forecast (TAFOR) of each of aerodrome of departure, destination, alternate, en-route alternate, take-off alternative, ETOPS en-route alternate and destination alternate.

Domestic Flight Folder shall be composed of the following items:

a. Multi-level prognostic upper-air charts or a choice of two of the following:
    i. Surface (10 meter level);
    ii. 1000 hPa level; 850 hPa level; and
    iii. 700 hPa level
b. Significant Weather Charts valid up to twelve (12) hours of the following levels:
    i. Medium level 700 hPa to 400 hPa or FL100 to FL250;
    ii. Low-level - Surface to 700 hPa or SFC-FL100;
    iii. Compiled list of Terminal Aerodrome Forecast (TAFOR) of each of aerodrome of departure, destination, alternate, en-route alternate, take off alternate.

PART II
FEES

Section 1. Schedule of Fees. The fees prescribed in this Section are applicable to the products and/or services and materials furnished by the AMSO.

Schedule of Fees		
Reference Code	Product/Service Type	Cost
IFF	Flight Documentation Folder for International Flights	US$ 15.00
DFF	Domestic Folder for Domestic Flights (Commercial)	P100.00

Section 2. Billing. The Accounting Section shall bill the User on a monthly basis. The statement of Account shall be issued by the PAGASA AerIS system administrator containing, among others, the description of products and services, corresponding cost computed based on the prevailing exchange rate at the time of rendition of service.

Section 3. Delinquent payment; surcharge. Payments made after fifteen (15) days from bill date shall be assessed a surcharge of one percent (1%) of the total amount due.

Section 4. Folder access suspension. Users are entitled to thirty (30) days grace period within which to settle their accounts Beyond which their access to the flight folder shall be suspended. The suspension will be lifted three (3) days after the User has satisfactory settled in full his accountabilities which includes his unpaid account plus the corresponding surcharge.

Section 5. Fees Collected. The fees collected by PAGASA from the Users pursuant to this Department Order shall be deposited to the National Treasury.

PART III
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. Periodic Review of Fees. The PAGASA Flight Folder fee structure shall be reviewed whenever necessary provided that the rates of fees herein provided may be increased only once a year, unless otherwise required by law, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuance.

Section 2. Revision of Fees. Notice of revision of fees shall be given to users or their duly authorized representatives at least four (4) months prior to the intended revision. During the said period, users may submit their views and/or comment to the service provider.

Section 3. User Consultation. Consultation with the Users shall be done as frequent as necessary to gauge the cost effectiveness of the service and/or product.

Section 4. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Department Order is declared unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, the other parts not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect

Section 5. Effectivity. This Department Order shall take effect immediately after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

(Sgd.) **ESTRELLA F. ALABASTRO**
Secretary

(PDI - May 12 & 19, 2006)

Charges filed vs car theft suspects in QC

By DJ Yap

CHARGES HAVE BEEN FILED AGAINST four suspected members of a car theft syndicate caught recently in a buy-bust operation.

The Regional Special Operation of the National Capital Region Police Office charged Joveno Lomocso, 31; Lamberto Hernandez, 43; Wella Ante, 28; and Ronald Aglugub with violation of the anti-car theft law before the Quezon City prosecutor's office.

The complaint said the respondents, with two other men, were caught negotiating with a man posing as a buyer for the sale of stolen vehicles on May 9 at a gasoline station on Commonwealth Avenue

The operation, conducted jointly by the National Bureau of Investigation Bulacan District Office and the 306 Provincial Mobile Group took place after businessman Rico Mangulabnan reported the theft of his Ford Everest on April 26 in Makati City.

Authorities received reports that Ante and Aglugub were seen aboard a Ford Everest. A police asset contacted the two and acted as a broker for the sale of a Ford Everest to SPO4 Rodolfo Rival, posing as a buyer. The transaction was set for May 9.

At the meeting, Ante and Aglugub, with Lomocso and Hernandez, arrived in a Toyota Revo with plate number XAF-805. They said no Ford Everest was available and offered other models instead. Rival agreed provided he was allowed to inspect the cars.

Two more men, Edgar Cantonjos and Danilo Panergo, arrived in a Mitsubishi Adventure with plate number SHB-792. The policemen then arrested all the suspects.

Businesswoman Teresa Parayno later claimed the Toyota Revo, which she said was stolen a few days earlier.

Though Cantonjos and Panergo were included in the charge sheet, the prosecutor said further investigation was required since there were no complainants against them.

METROBRIEFS

2 guards linked to journalist's slay

TWO JAIL GUARDS and a fire marshal have been linked to the killing of tabloid reporter Albert Orsolino who died in an ambush near the boundary of Caloocan and Malabon on Tuesday morning, a police official said. "The investigation pointed to the them as possible suspects," said Caloocan City Police Chief of Police Senior Supt. Geronimo Reside . The motive could be vendetta, he added. "The guards were alleged to be relatives of a complainant against Orsolino who was killed a year ago. The fire marshal, on the other hand, reportedly had an axe to grind against the reporter," Reside said. The police official also clarified earlier reports that the two guards had been detained. "Unless positively tagged by witnesses, we cannot detain them," Reside said. The fireman, who denied the charges, said the motorcycle used in the ambush which is now under police custody was sold to one "Tony Bombay" last year. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Open house at German School

AFTER 25 YEARS of exclusively serving Metro Manila's German-speaking community, Deutsche Schule Manila is opening its doors to non-German speakers by offering an English Stream for the coming school year. To learn more what this is all about, parents are invited to an open house on Saturday, May 20, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at 75 Swaziland Street, Better Living Subdivision, Parañaque City. Call Tel: 7761000, e-mail: dsm@eis-manila.org, or visit the website at: www.eis-manila.org.

'Not our signatures'

SIX public high school teachers are asking the Office of the Ombudsman to withdraw a case filed against Taguig City Mayor Freddie Tinga, saying that they had not signed the complaint sheet. The names of Rosemarie Romero and Lorina Doong of the Taguig National High School; Dolorita dela Corte, Nestor Ramos, Yolanda Iglesias and Joseph Soguilon of the Upper Bicutan National High School were contained in the complaint that accused Tinga of abuse of authority, oppression, unfair practice and discrimination. The charges stemmed from the alleged cutting off of the teachers' allowance from the Local School Board (LSB, headed by Tinga. The teachers, according to the complaint, alleged that the LSB stopped giving them their allowances without prior notice and legal basis. Late last month, the six teachers were surprised when they received a copy of an order for administrative investigation of the case from the Ombudsman since they said they had not filed any case against the mayor. "It now appears that by some technical maneuver, our signatures were transferred to the said Complaint-Affidavit," said the teachers in their joint affidavit. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

4 nabbed in QC marijuana 'buy-bust' raid

By DJ Yap

MORE THAN 100 KILOS OF MArijuana was seized yesterday during a "buy-bust" operation in Quezon City, in what police believe to be a sign that more drug traders are favoring the illegal herb over shabu, or metamphetamine hydrochloride.

The haul included three bags and a box of marijuana "bricks," or dried leaves wound up with packaging tape, which were found inside a rented room at 70 Lorraine St., Parkway Village, Barangay Apolonio Samson.

Weighing just short of 114 kilos and worth nearly P350,000, it was the biggest haul yet of "ready-to-distribute" marijuana in Metro Manila this year, according to police.

"It's the first time we came across an operation this big involving marijuana as a finished product. The bricks were all ready for distribution," said Police Director Marcelo Ele of the Directorate of Investigation and Detective Management at Camp Crame.

The operation showed that drug dealers were now shifting their attention from shabu to marijuana, since the police had cut off much of the shabu supply in the country, he added.

Three men and a woman were also arrested in the operation jointly conducted by the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Follow-up

They were identified as Boni Diza, Rosemarie Vallos and Ricardo Royo, who allegedly sourced the marijuana from Mountain Province, and Loreto Umanid, who purportedly served as the group's "runner."

Ele said the buy-bust operation was a follow-up to two previous operations in Malanday, Marikina City, the other day, in which almost two kilos of the illegal substance were recovered.

Acting on information given by a tipster, a CIDG agent posed as a buyer and contacted one of the four, who led the policemen to the house, said CIDG's Inspector Edgardo Fernandez.

No search warrant was necessary since it was a buy-bust operation, indicating a crime in progress, he added.

The two-story house was reportedly owned by one Victorina Sampol, who told police she had been leasing a room on the second floor to the suspects since February, Ele said.

Feud over dog led to killing of man in Las Piñas

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE DEATH OF A BELOVED PET dog could have caused the killing of a man in Las Piñas City on Wednesday.

Police said that three hooded men had fired at Hilario Sequio and his girlfriend Rosita dela Torre inside their house in Las Piñas City on Wednesday night.

Dela Torre was able to unmask one of the suspects during the incident and identified him as Efren Abugado, a neighbor. Dela Torre's nine-year-old daughter, who witnessed the killing, also identified Abugado as one of the attackers, said Insp. Johndale Sulit, deputy chief of the criminal investigation division.

Sulit said the neighbors had been feuding after Sequio's dog was reportedly killed accidentally by Abugado's son last week.

"The two parties fought about it and Abugado had filed slander and threat charges against Sequio in the barangay hall," Sulit said.

Seguio and Dela Torre also filed similar charges against the suspect in the barangay.

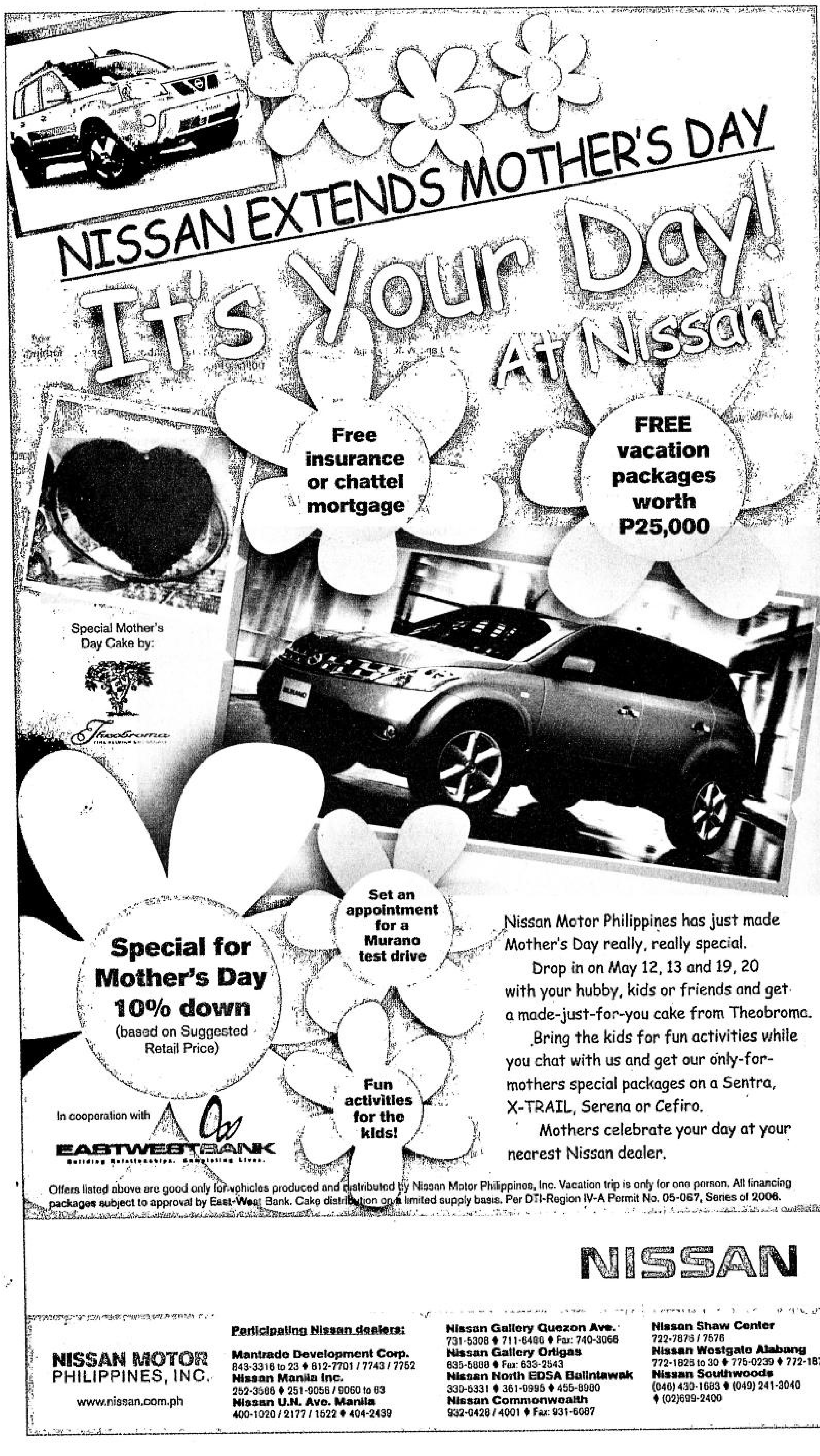
Barangay officials referred the case to the police on May 10.

The victim's father, Aniceto, told police that the couple were in their house on Opal Street, Golden Acres in Barangay Talon Uno when the armed suspects barged in at around 9 p.m. on Wednesday.

Sequio had multiple gunshots and died on the spot. Dela Torre, who was wounded in the arm, was treated at the Las Piñas Medical Clinic, Sulit told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Abugado, who fled after the incident, was arrested in the neighborhood in a follow-up operation conducted by the police intelligence unit. The two other suspects remain at large.

Abugado was not armed when arrested but he admitted he owned a gun. He added that the firearm was being repaired at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City.



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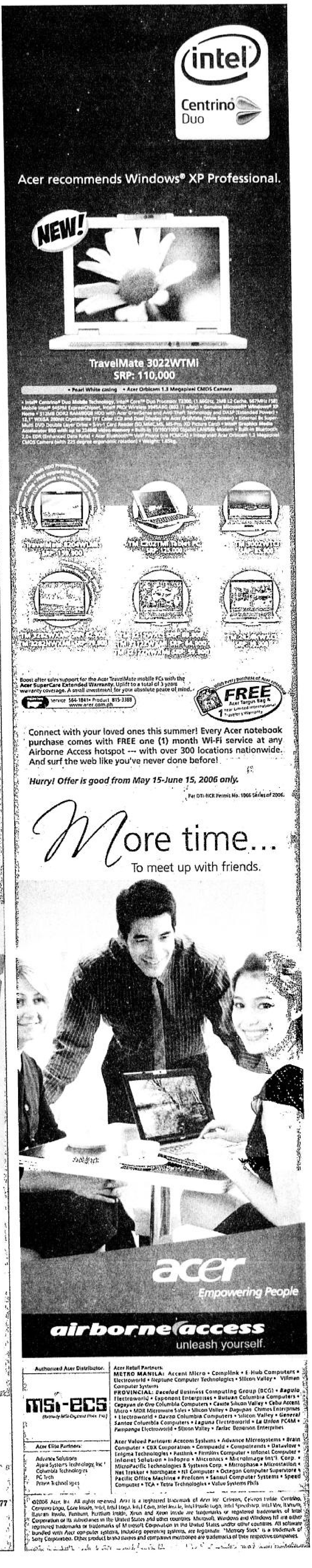

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US eyes negotiating new treaty with N. Korea

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States is considering a new approach to North Korea that would include beginning negotiations on a peace treaty at the same time as six-country talks on dismantling Pyongyang's nuclear programs, the New York Times reported late on Wednesday.

President George W. Bush is very likely to approve the new approach, which had been hotly debated by different factions within his administration, the Times said on its website.

But the change would only happen if North Korea returned to the talks, which have been stalled for months by its refusal to participate.

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, chief US negotiator with North Korea, was in Singapore on Wednesday, US officials told Reuters. South Korean media reported that he would soon visit their country but that could not be immediately confirmed.

The new thinking about North Korea would coincide with efforts by the United States and other major powers, so far fruitless, to persuade Iran to drop its planned nuclear program.

Many officials and experts are concerned that Iran draws inspiration from North Korea, which has suffered few international penalties since declaring that it possesses nuclear weapons and will continue to make nuclear fuel.

Although the United States in recent months launched a crackdown on Pyongyang's income from illicit activities like counterfeiting, China and South Korea have continued and in some instances increased aid and investment to the impoverished North, US officials say.

North Korea has long demanded a peace treaty to replace the armistice that ended the 1950-1953 Korean war and the administration has said previously it would be willing to consider working on such an agreement.

But the question of when such benefits might flow to Pyongyang has sharply divided the administration.

Many officials have been hoping the communist regime in Pyongyang would collapse but experts say that is unlikely to happen any time soon.

The administration initially insisted the North dismantle its nuclear programs before receiving any economic or political returns but has softened that position over time. The latest move to offer simultaneous peace treaty talks and nuclear negotiations looks to be a further modification.

However, it is unclear whether this new offer will alter Pyongyang's stance. It has refused to return to six-country negotiations on the nuclear issue since an inconclusive session last November.

In recent interviews with Reuters, two senior US officials were very pessimistic about persuading the North to return to the table and said they did not expect any movement until after Bush leaves office at the earliest.

State department spokesperson Sean McCormack declined to comment on the New York Times report.

But he told Reuters the North still had not made the fundamental decision to abandon its nuclear program and had not agreed on a date to restart the nuclear negotiations.

McCormack noted that a joint statement approved Sept. 19 by the six parties—including the United States, North and South Korea, China, Russia and Japan—foreshadowed talks on a broad range of issues, including a new peace treaty, within the context of the six-party process. *Reuters*

5 in Indonesia family infected with bird flu

JAKARTA—AT LEAST FIVE MEMBERS OF AN Indonesian family have been infected with bird flu, the World Health Organization confirmed on Wednesday, after the case triggered widespread fears of human-to-human transmission.

There is no immediate evidence the H5N1 flu virus passed easily among at least seven members of the family in North Sumatra province. But experts said nothing could be ruled out and more testing was crucial.

In a day of fast-moving events, the WHO also said a caterer from Surabaya city in East Java had died of bird flu, while Indonesia's health ministry said local tests had confirmed a 12-year-old boy from Jakarta who died four days ago was infected with H5N1. Both cases are separate from the Sumatra case.

Clusters of human infections are worrying because they indicate that the virus might be mutating into a form that is easily transmissible among humans. That, experts say, could spark a pandemic in which millions might die.

For the moment, the virus is mainly a disease in birds and is hard for humans to catch.

In Djibouti, which has confirmed the first human case in sub-Saharan Africa after a 2-year-old girl tested positive for H5N1, slaughtering of poultry was halted after angry villagers refused to cooperate unless they received immediate compensation.

Officials hoped to re-start culling domestic chickens to contain the virus as soon as possible. The impoverished nation in the Horn of Africa has appealed for international help to fight the disease. *Reuters*

China bans risky breast enlarger gel

BEIJING—A GEL USED FOR BREAST ENlargements in China has been banned after hundreds of women injected with the fluid reported suffering severe pain and other health problems, state media said Thursday.

The State Food and Drug Administration last month banned the use of hydrophilic polyacrylamide gel, known in China as Ao Mei Ding, the China Daily newspaper reported.

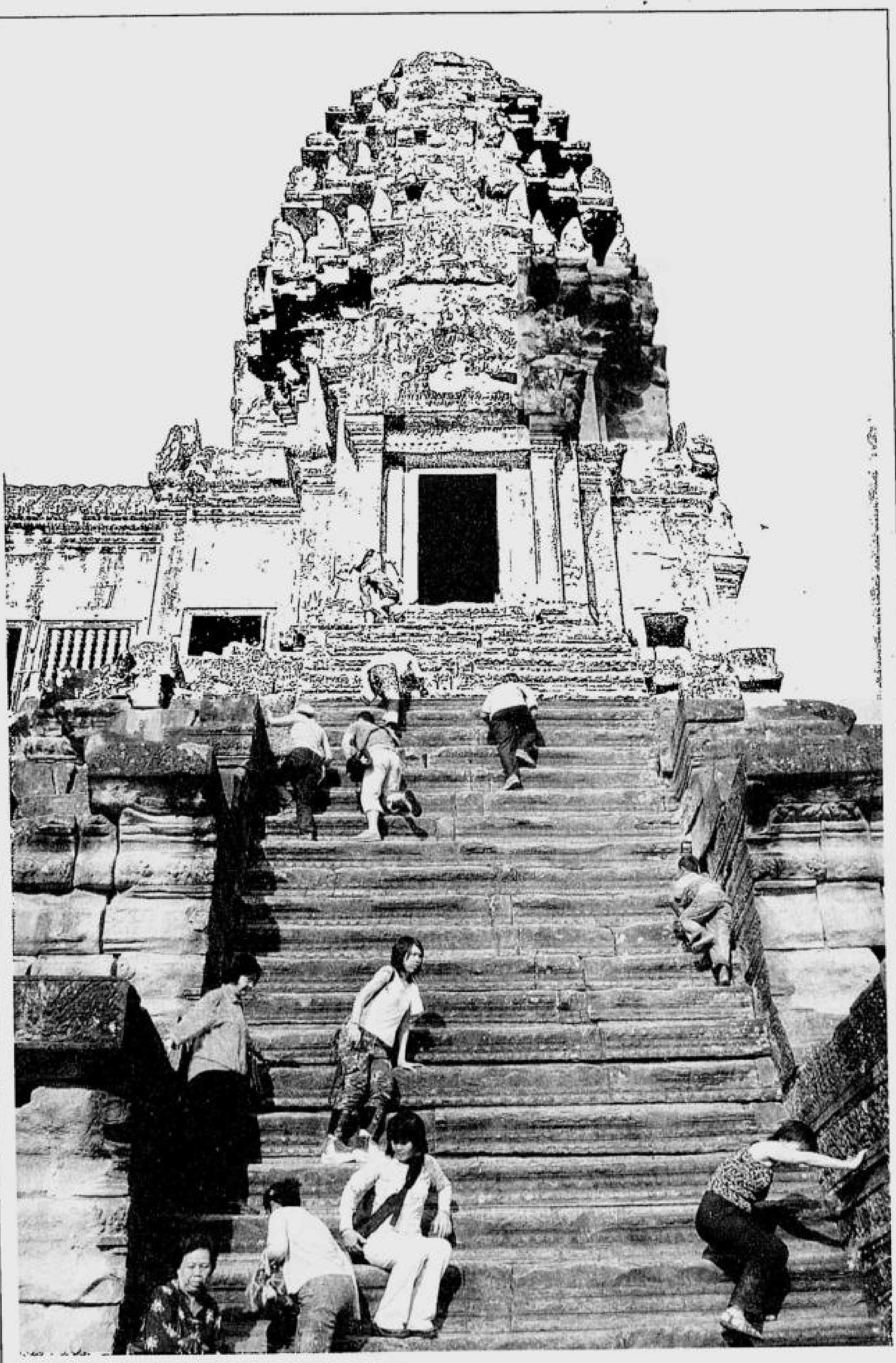
"It continuously caused negative effects ... and the administration's monitoring center believes its safety cannot be guaranteed," the paper quoted the government body as saying.

More than 300,000 Chinese women have been injected with the so-called "magic liquid" in the past five years, estimated Qiao Qun, director of plastic surgery at Peking Union Hospital.

Qun said more than 100 women come to her hospital every year to request to have the liquid removed after suffering from aches and pains.

"Many are in such agony that they can hardly sleep and some have had the harrowing experience of having their breasts removed to save their lives," the report said.

However the gel, made by Chinese firm Fu Hua Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. in the northeastern province of Jilin, cannot be completely removed and will forever threaten the health of the women concerned, it said. *AFP*



CAMBODIA TOURIST-DRAWER

Tourists climb up the Angkor Wat temple in Siem Reap province, some 314 km northwest of Phnom Penh, May 10. Almost one and a half million foreign tourists flocked to Cambodia last year, with most of them passing through the country's famed Angkor Wat temple complex. AFP

'Chanchu' batters China, kills 9 people

SHANGHAI—A TYPHOON SLAMMED INTO south China on Thursday killing eight people and forcing the evacuation of more than 900,000, Xinhua news agency said, while Vietnam was searching for 99 fishermen missing at sea.

Typhoon "Chanchu" ("Caloy" in the Philippines), packing heavy rain and winds up to 170 kph (106 mph), made landfall between the cities of Shantou and Xiamen in the early morning, the Hong Kong Observatory said.

China's coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian took the full brunt of the storm.

Eight people were killed in Shantou, where Chanchu, the strongest typhoon on record to enter the South China Sea in May, triggered house collapses and landslides, Xinhua said.

Two children were among the dead, Xinhua reported, quoting local government sources.

Almost all roads in Shantou were flooded and there were several blackouts, Xinhua said, adding downpours in Fujian had led to flooding in a number of rivers.

State television news said Chanchu had been downgraded to a tropical storm and was heading northeast at a speed of only 25 kph but it would still bring strong rainfall to China's eastern provinces, including financial hub Shanghai.

Vietnam's National Search and Rescue Center, in a bulletin carried by the Voice of Vietnam radio station, said 99 fishermen aboard 11 ships last made radio contact on Wednesday morning some 160 nautical miles (300 km) south of Hainan island, then in the storm's path.

Pham Quoc Te, a senior official at the center, said the coast guard and navy were leading a rescue mission, and officials had contacted authorities in China and Hong Kong for help.

"Because the typhoon is still very strong at the moment, it will take time for rescue teams to locate and approach the missing ships," Te told Reuters.

Typhoons, drawing strength from warm water, roar into China from the South China Sea every year between May and September, losing power once they make landfall.

Xinhua said more than 900,000 people in Guangdong and Fujian had been evacuated in the path of Chanchu, which killed at least 37 people when it swept through the Philippines at the weekend.

The eye of the storm crossed the Chinese coast halfway between Hong Kong and Taiwan, both often the victims of direct hits.

An ore-carrying Belgian ship with eight crew members was stranded offshore and a Chinese rescue vessel was expected to reach it on Thursday, state television said. *Reuters*

Using hi-tech gadgets, students find new ways to cheat

LOS ANGELES—AT THE UNIVERSITY of California at Los Angeles, a student loaded his class notes into a handheld e-mail device and tried to read them during an exam; a classmate turned him in. At the journalism school at San Jose State University, students tried to use spell check on their laptops when part of the exam was designed to test their ability to spell.

And at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, after students photographed test questions with their cell phone cameras, transmitted them to classmates outside the exam room and got the answers back in text messages, the university put in place a new proctoring system.

"If they'd spend as much time studying," said an exasperated Ron Yasbin, dean of the College of Sciences at UNLV, "they'd all be A students."

With their arsenal of electronic gadgets, students these days find it easier to cheat. And so, faced with an array of inventive techniques in recent years, college officials find themselves in a new game of cat and mouse, trying to outwit would-be cheaters this exam season with a range of strategies—cutting off Internet access from laptops, demanding the surrender of cell phones before tests or simply requiring that exams be taken the old-fashioned way, with pen and paper.

"It is kind of a hassle," said Ryan M. Dapremont, 21, who just finished his third year at Seaver College at Pepperdine University, and has had to take his exams on paper.

"My handwriting is so bad," he said. "Whenever I find myself having to write in a bluebook, I find my hand cramps up more, and I can't write as quickly."

Some students said they thought cheating these days was more a product of the mind-set, not the tools at hand. *NYT*

Stunning gene comparison suggests ancestors of humans, chimpanzees may have interbred

By Nicholas Wade

THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE HUMAN and chimpanzee lineages, a pivotal event in human evolution, may have occurred millions of years later than fossil bones suggest, and the break may not have been as clean as humans might like.

A new comparison of the human and chimp genomes suggests that after the two lineages separated, they may have begun interbreeding.

The analysis, by David Reich, Nick Patterson and colleagues at the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Mass., sets up a serious conflict between the date of the split as indicated by fossil skulls, about 7 million years ago, and the more recent date implied by genetic analysis, as late as 5.4 million years ago.

The conflict can be resolved, Reich's team suggests in an article published in Thursday's issue of Nature, if there were in fact two splits between the human and chimp lineages, with the first being followed by interbreeding between the two populations and then a second split.

The suggestion of a hybridization has startled paleoanthropologists, who nonetheless are treating the new genetic data seriously.

Hybrid populations often go extinct because the males are sterile, Reich pointed out, so hybrid females may have mated with male chimps to produce viable offspring. The human lineage finally re-emerged from this hybrid population, Reich suggests, explaining the younger genetic dates, while the very early fossils with human-like features may come from the earlier period before the hybridization.

The Reich team's study is a detailed analysis of the human and chimp genomes, and also draws on DNA sequences from the gorilla, orangutan and macaque to iron out ambiguities. They calculate that the human and chimp lines must have split completely apart at the earliest 6.3 million years ago and more probably 5.4 million years ago.

But besides averaging genome-wide differences in DNA to get on overall fix on when the two species split apart, they have also been able to scroll along the genome and estimate the relative age of each small section.

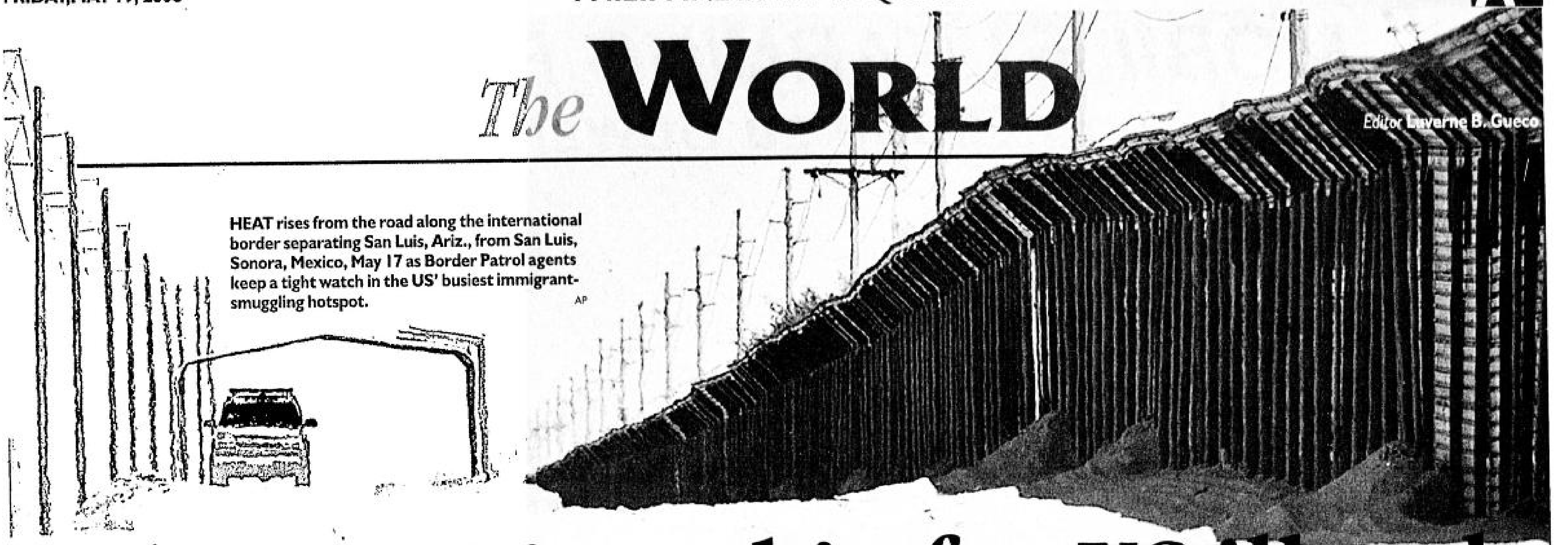
One finding is that the X chromosomes of humans and chimps appear to have diverged about 1.2 million years more recently than the other chromosomes. Females have two X chromosomes, males one X and one Y chromosome.

One explanation for this, Reich's team says, is that there was a hybridization between the recently separated chimp and human lineages. *NYT*

AN ORANGUTAN plays with a football at an amusement park in Seoul, May 18. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Laverne B. Gueco



HEAT rises from the road along the international border separating San Luis, Ariz., from San Luis, Sonora, Mexico, May 17 as Border Patrol agents keep a tight watch in the US' busiest immigrant-smuggling hotspot. AP

A shot at citizenship for US illegals

Senate backs fence along border, citizenship for illegals with 2-year stay

WASHINGTON—THE SENATE AGREED TO GIVE millions of illegal immigrants a shot at US citizenship and backed construction of 370 miles of triple-layered fencing along the Mexican border, but prospects that legislation will clear Congress were clouded by a withering attack against President George W. Bush by a prominent Republican.

"Regardless of what the president says, what he is proposing is amnesty," said Rep. James Sensenbrenner, the lawmaker who would lead House of Representatives negotiators in any attempt to draft a compromise immigration bill this year.

Bush insisted that he has no interest in amnesty for illegal immigrants and appealed for appreciation for every immigrant whose hard work "lifts the spirit of this country."

The votes on the Senate floor gave fresh momentum to legislation that closely follows Bush's call for a broad bill. The measure includes actions to secure the borders, the citizenship-related provisions for illegal immigrants and a new guest worker program for as many as 200,000 people a year. Senate passage probably will come next week.

Sen. David Vitter led the drive to strip from the bill a provision to give an eventual chance at citizenship to illegal immigrants who have been in the country more than two years. His attempt failed, 66-33, to a bipartisan coalition, and the provision survived. In all, 41 Democrats joined with 24 Republicans and one independent to turn back the proposal.

The vote to build what supporters called a "real fence"—as distinct from the virtual fence already incorporated in the legislation—was 83-16. The fence would be built in areas "most often used by smugglers and illegal aliens," as determined by federal officials. Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions estimated the cost at roughly $3.2 million per mile, more than $900 million for 300 miles.

It marked the first significant victory for conservatives eager to leave their stamp on a measure that looks increasingly as if it is headed toward Senate passage.

"What we have here has become a symbol for the right wing in American politics," said Sen. Dick Durbin, the Senate's second-ranking Democrat. He said passage would mean "our relationship with Mexico would come down to a barrier between our two countries."

The House legislation passed over strenuous Democratic opposition. It would make all illegal aliens subject to prosecution as felons and impose construction of a 700-mile fence along the Mexican border—more than twice as long as the barrier the Senate backed. *AP*

53 dead after Taliban raid on Afghan town

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN—TALIBAN INsurgents launched a major attack on a town in the southern Afghan province of Helmand and 13 policemen and 40 Taliban were killed in nine hours of fighting, government officials said on Thursday.

In a separate incident, a suicide car bomber attacked a convoy in the western city of Herat, killing himself and an American, police said. The American was a civilian state department contractor, the US Embassy said.

The Taliban attacked the southern town, Mosa Qala, on Wednesday evening and the fighting went on until early on Thursday, government officials said.

"Thirteen policemen were killed and six were injured," the interior ministry said.

"Forty people on the enemy side were killed," a ministry official said, citing a statement from spokesperson Yousuf Stanizai.

The Taliban have stepped up attacks on foreign and Afghan government forces in recent months. The violence in parts of the country is the worst it has been since the hardline Islamists were driven from power in late 2001.

Helmand's deputy governor, Amir Mohammad Akhundzada, said it was the biggest attack in the province since the end of Taliban rule. Hundreds of Taliban were involved, he said.

Fighting was continuing as security forces battled the insurgents as they withdrew, Akhundzada said, adding there had been some civilian casualties but he did not know how many.

KILLED—Canadian Capt. Nichola Kathleen Sarah Goddard in undated photo. REUTERS

British troops are in charge of security in the province but no foreign soldiers were involved in the battle, he and the Interior Ministry said.

The Herat provincial police chief said earlier a suicide bomber had attacked a military convoy and the dead American was a soldier. An Afghan soldier and interpreter had been wounded, he said.

But US Embassy spokesperson Chris Harris said it was a civilian convoy and the dead American was a civilian training Afghan police.

The Taliban focused their attack on Mosa Qala on government offices and police stations and many shops in the town's market caught fire during the battle, Akhundzada said.

The town, 470 km southwest of the capital, Kabul, is about 40 km north of the province's Sangin district, the scene of frequent clashes between Taliban and foreign and government forces.

A Taliban commander, speaking by telephone, said 30 policemen had been killed. Taliban spokesperson Qari Mohammad Yousuf told the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency Taliban had captured the town but later withdrew.

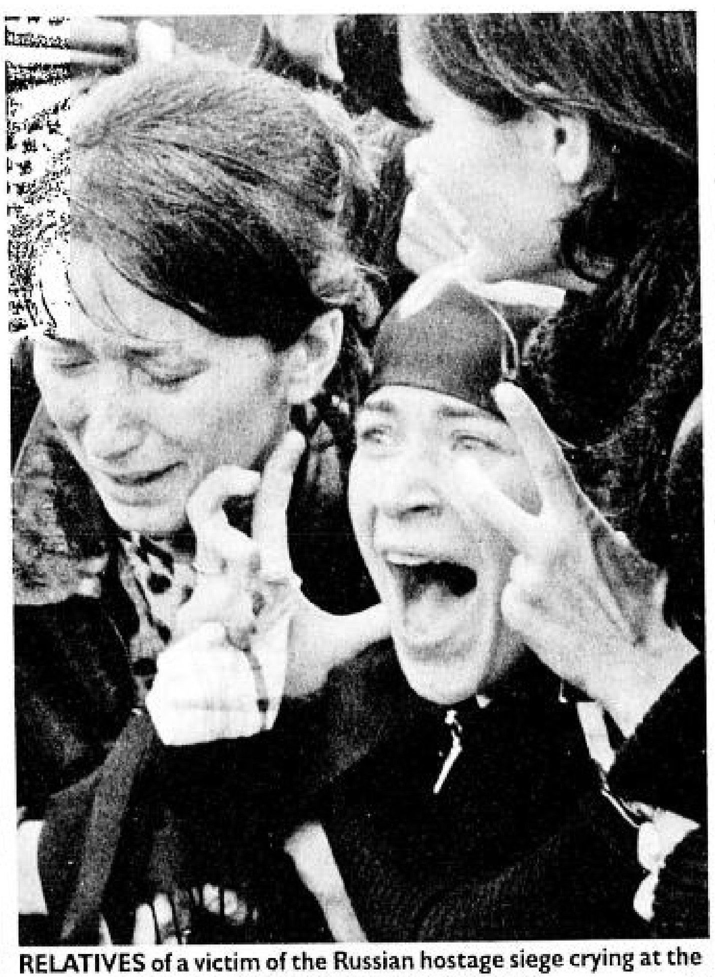
The recent surge in violence comes as Nato members are sending reinforcements to boost their peacekeeping force from 9,000 to 16,000.

With about 23,000 troops, the United States now has its largest force in Afghanistan since its military involvement began in October 2001.

A Canadian woman soldier was killed in neighboring Kandahar province on Wednesday, hours before Canada's parliament narrowly backed a two-year extension of Canada's Afghan mission to February 2009.

The US military said 18 Taliban were killed and 26 captured in the fighting in Panjwai district, 25 km west of Kandahar town.

The Taliban were ousted by US-led forces in late 2001 after refusing to hand over Osama bin Laden, architect of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. *Reuters*



RELATIVES of a victim of the Russian hostage siege crying at the cemetery in Beslan, North Ossetia, Sept. 6, 2004. AFP

Beslan victims demand harsh sentence on attacker

VLADIKAVKAZ, RUSSIA—Relatives of those killed in the Beslan school massacre called for a harsh sentence—even death—as the reading of a guilty verdict against the sole-surviving hostage-taker entered its third day Thursday.

Some of those who lost loved ones in the September 2004 tragedy think a decade-old national moratorium on capital punishment should be lifted for Nurpashi Kulayev, 25, the sole survivor among the 32 hostage-takers.

"I want an adequate sentence. He deserves death. His crime cannot be justified," said Rita Sidakova, whose nine-year-old daughter was killed in the world's bloodiest hostage drama.

"Before they died, our children were held hostage, drank urine, fainted for lack of oxygen in a crowded room and soiled their clothes because they were not allowed to go to toilet," Sidakova said, tears streaking her face.

"Even if there is a moratorium, I want Kulayev sentenced to death. Maybe one day the moratorium will be lifted and he will die," she added. *AFP*

No one knows how many illegals in UK—Blair

LONDON—THE AURA OF HAPlessness that hangs over Prime Minister Tony Blair's government grew Wednesday when he admitted that it has no idea exactly how many illegal immigrants are in Britain.

"There are no official estimates of the number of illegal immigrants into the United Kingdom," Blair told parliament where the main opposition Conservatives seized on the issue.

"By its very nature illegal immigration is difficult to measure and any estimates would be highly speculative."

Immigration minister Tony McNulty told BBC television later that the best estimate of the number of illegal immigrants, which was "roughly in the ball park," was between 310,000 and 570,000, and it could take 10 years to deport them.

Blair sought to use the issue—which dominated the morning newspapers and radio talk shows—to promote his controversial plan to introduce ID cards for everyone in the country.

"We need identity cards both for foreign nationals and for British nationals," he said. "If we want to track people coming in and out of our country and know the identity of people here, that is what we have to do."

But with his popularity among voters at its lowest point since he came to power nine years ago, and his Labour government ensnared in several furores, Blair was left on the defensive.

In a testy exchange across the floor of the lower House of Commons, Conservative leader David Cameron said the prime minister sounded "rattled" and that the government was in "paralysis."

The immigration flap grew out of an admission Tuesday by Dave Roberts, the Home Office official in charge of deportations. He told a parliamentary committee that he did not have "the faintest idea" how many illegal immigrants were in the country.

Political analysts were not too surprised, given that visitors to Britain go through immigration controls only when they arrive, and that there has never been a peacetime ID card system as in continental Europe. *AFP*

Old aircraft carrier to serve as artificial reef off Florida coast

US AIRCRAFT carrier Oriskany sinking May 17 to become the world's largest intentionally created artificial reef. REUTERS

MIAMI—THE USS ORISKANY AIRCRAFT carrier on Wednesday became the first US warship scuttled as an artificial reef after explosive charges sent it to the ocean floor off Florida's Gulf Coast.

A little over 30 minutes after the explosive charges were set off, the 270-m, 32,000-ton US Navy vessel was completely submerged.

"It's been successful," US Navy spokesperson Pat Dolen said after the sinking of the ship 37 km off Pensacola, in western Florida.

US Navy divers will inspect the shipwreck on Thursday to determine whether it sits upright at a depth of 66 m, as intended.

"It's kind of sad," said retired US Navy pilot Stuart Reynolds, who had flown missions from the Oriskany during the Vietnam War and watched the imposing ship go to its watery grave.

"But now she has a new life; she's better off than being cut up for razor blades," he said, speaking by cell phone from the Reel Easy, one of the hundreds of boats that sailed out into the Gulf of Mexico to watch the aircraft carrier's final moments afloat.

"Oh my God, she's gone," he said minutes after the ship was completely submerged.

Munching on a pork chop that Reel Easy's captain, "Buddy," grilled on the fishing boat's barbecue, Reynolds said he planned to dive the wreck with his family.

The Oriskany is the first US Navy warship intentionally sunk to create an artificial reef to attract coral growth, scuba divers, fish and fishermen. It is also the largest ship ever sunk on purpose to create a reef. *AFP*

MOBILE LEARNING FOR KIDS

Handog ng Globe sa Buwan ng mga Ina

Globe pays tribute to a yearlong partnership with Gizmo Advisory Board (GAB)

Recognizing the need for parents to address the issue of responsible mobile parenting as well as take part in the holistic development of the Filipino child, Globe Gizmo Prepaid partnered with The Parenting Company to convene some of the country's top family, communications and education experts for the first-ever advisory board on responsible mobile connectivity for the youth. Dubbed the Gizmo Advisory Board (GAB), the group sought to study the Filipino youth's mobile usage habits, pinpointing significant issues and formulating projects that are attuned to the segment's distinct needs.

For the past year, the GAB had actively set up activities in their effort to encourage the use of technology as a non-threatening influence for child learning and nurturing. The GAB endeavored to turn the challenge of modernity into an opportunity for development and pursued activities that aimed to re-evaluate and reconfigure child nurturing methods to keep up with the needs of modern Filipino child.

The members of the board consist of reputable parenting advocates:

Ms. Emily Abrera is the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. An icon in the advertising industry in the country, she is currently Chairman Emeritus of McCann Erickson Philippines, the country's leading advertising agency.

Dr. Leticia Ho is a former Dean of the College of Education in the University of the Philippines. Although her main focus nowadays is her practice of clinical psychology, she continues to teach at the University of the Philippines and gives her time to advisory boards that are in line with her advocacy.

Ms. Tina Juan is popularly known for her daily morning show "In Fitness & In Health" and for her fitness column in the Philippine Daily Inquirer. A certified fitness professional, she is also the fitness columnist for Health Today, Badminton Philippines and Metro Magazine and the author of "Lose Weight! Feel Good! Look Great!"

Mr. Francis Kong is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Funworks, Inc., the group that brought to the country Mad Science, the latest rage in teaching science. Also a writer and excellent speaker, he has written books on entrepreneurship, life values and parenting and speaks on topics such as leadership and management.

Ms. Francie Lacnilao is the Directress of The Learning Tree Center, an elementary education institution dedicated to the holistic development of children. The Learning Tree Center has been recognized for its non-traditional ways of teaching and educating its students.

Ms. Maricel Pangilinan is a multi-awarded actress turned "mompreneur" and writer/columnist. She is the author of the best-selling book "Mommy Talk" and columnist of the same in the Philippine Star. A well-known parenting advocate in the country, she is a convener of the Philippine Parenting Convention.

Mr. Chot Reyes is the coach of our national basketball team and President of coachcom.inc, a business and executive coaching company. The former coach of the Coca-Cola tigers, he is a well-known sports figure in the country and has also made his mark as a motivational speaker with his talks on "How to Transform Your Family into a Team."

Dr. Nina Yuson is the President of the Museo Pambata and the Chairperson of the Asia Pacific Committee of the World Board of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. She is also a writer of children's books.

Dr. Grace Koo is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of the Philippines teaching post-graduate courses. She was a recipient of the UP Chancellor's Award for Most Outstanding Teacher in 2000. A frequent speaker on parenting and education, a voracious reader and classical music advocate.

Consumer Business Head of Globe Telecom, Ferdinand M. Dela Cruz, underscored the importance of instilling responsible mobile connectivity to Globe Gizmo's young subscriber base. "Advancements in communications technology serve not as a stand-in for human contact, but as an enhancer of existing relationships," says dela Cruz. "And through Globe Gizmo, Globe continuously strives to strengthen the bond between parent and child," he adds.

Gizmo Youth Debate takes on responsible mobile usage

To mark the launch of GAB, Globe Gizmo Prepaid initiated the first ever public debate for children at the elementary school level. Held at the Claro M. Recto Hall of the University of the Philippines last Sept. 12, 2005, the tournament posed the controversial issue of whether children should be allowed to use mobile phones in school.

The Parenting Company
GLOBE GIZMO
DEBATE TOURNAMENT

The board chose The Learning Tree Child Growth Center, a progressive educational institution, as the pilot school for the Globe Gizmo Debate Tournament. Months before the actual debate, interested students from grades four to six signed up for workshops and seminars facilitated by former champion student debater Fabian Mangahas. The special classes helped the children fine tune their arguments and hone their public speaking skills. These students were eventually formed into The Learning Tree Debate Society from which the tournament participants were chosen.

The British Parliamentary System format was chosen for the debate. Government teams argued for banning mobile phones because it was a distraction, encouraged children to spend, and could be used for cheating. Opposition teams, on the other hand, focused on the connectivity and learning that mobile phones could provide, emphasizing that phone ownership itself could help children learn the meaning of responsibility. "Don't underestimate us just because we're kids. Having mobile phones in school will help us practice self-control," asserts Mishka Ligot of the Opening Opposition team.

According to Cathy Santamaria, Globe Head of Segment Marketing, the group was convened by Globe Gizmo Prepaid in line with its objective of promoting responsible mobile parenting. "As the country's first prepaid mobile phone brand for children, Globe Gizmo Prepaid is committed to initiating mobile innovations that are age-appropriate and beneficial to the holistic development of the Filipino child," she adds.

Bringing a day of fun and wonder to the Baseco kids

The joy of learning and discovery can brighten the life of any child, and those from underprivileged communities are particularly in need of this special gift. Through the GAB, Globe Gizmo brought a day of fun and wonder to less fortunate children from Barangay Baseco in Tondo, Manila last December.

The residents of Baseco were struggling to recover from the effects of several large fires which ravaged their community. Globe Gizmo and GAB's outreach program brought new hope to these families through the simple act of giving their children a chance to learn and play in a fun, safe, and nurturing environment.

About a hundred Baseco kids enjoyed a tour through the Museo Pambata and a special presentation courtesy of Mad Science. The youngsters, mostly aged 8 to 12 years old and studying in elementary schools near their area, arrived bright and early at the Museo, accompanied by designated chaperons from their community. They were warmly welcomed by Museo Pambata President Dr. Nina Yuson and celebrity parent Anthony Pangilinan, along with representatives from Globe Gizmo and The Parenting Company. After having some morning snacks, the children eagerly explored the different rooms of the Museo, led by friendly tour guides.

As they assembled for lunch, the children excitedly recounted the morning's activities. Five-year-old Daniel beamed happily as he shared, "Nag-enjoy po ako saka marami akong natutunan." ["I enjoyed it a lot and learned many things."] Meanwhile, a little girl in fifth grade named Regie said: "Masaya po ako kasi natuto ako sa paglalaro at pakikinig." ["I'm happy because I learned through playing and listening."]

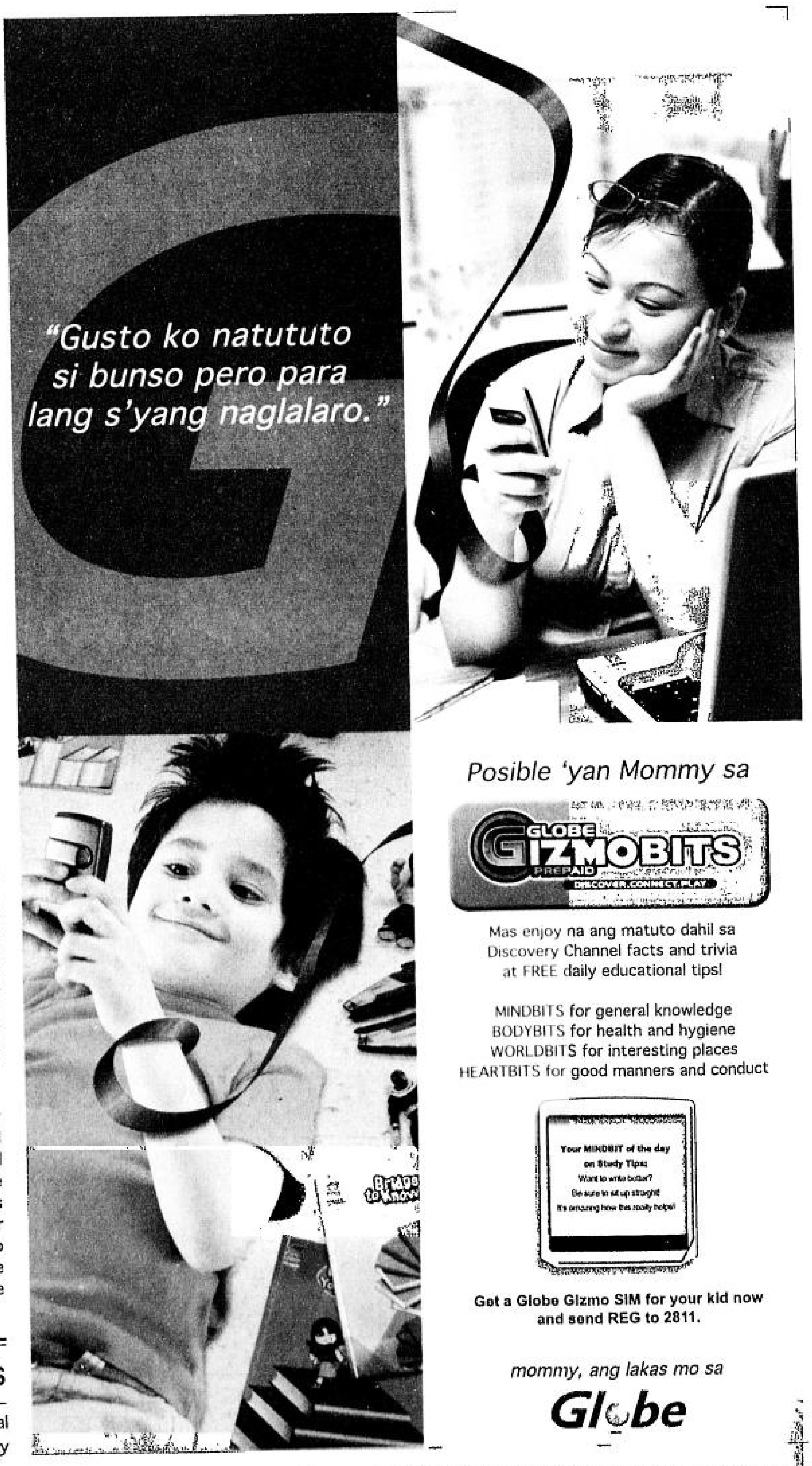
The project was part of the GAB's efforts to promote children's right to quality education and Globe Gizmo's contribution to the holistic development of the Filipino child.

GAB designs Globe Gizmobits for kids

Learning has become more fun and enjoyable for kids with daily educational tips received as text for free with Gizmobits.

Developed by GAB, Gizmobits include instructive text messages that ensure that kids are getting new, exciting, reliable and helpful information.

Globe Gizmo is also packed with mobile parenting features to ensure uninterrupted fun and learning. There's Emergency Text that allows the kid to send emergency text messages in the absence of load. Another feature is the Quick Text that lets the kid send instant messages via a simple combination of numbers in the keypad. Low Load Alert functions as a SOS signal to the parents that their kid already needs reloading. Finally, Word Up—a language tool that consists of dictionary, thesaurus, puzzles, translations and vocabulary features.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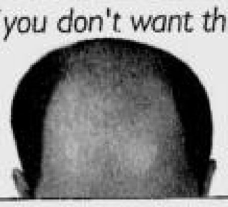

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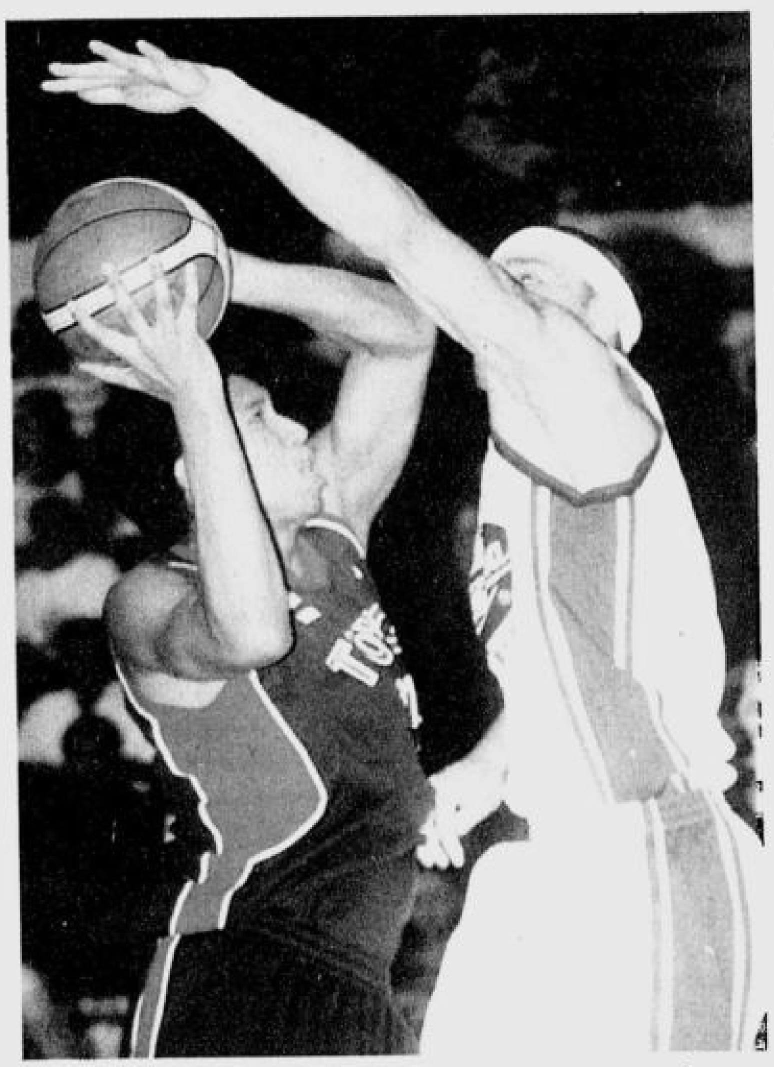
Sparks nip Spinners, corner No. 1 seeding



TOYOTA Otis' Joe Devance works around the blocking arm of Magnolia's Kelly Williams during their game yesterday. ERIK ARAZAS

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TOYOTA Otis swept into the semifinals on a high note following a morale-boosting 89-85 overtime victory over Magnolia Ice Cream yesterday in the PBL Unity Cup at the Olivarez Sports Center.

Already safely through to the next round, the Sparks refused to take it easy, finally overcoming the Spinners in the extra period to clinch their 10th win in 14 games.

The win not only avenged their first-round loss (81-77) to Magnolia but also the franchise's first victory over the powerhouse Spinners since joining the league in 2004.

"That's our purpose, to enter the semifinals on a high note," said Toyota coach Louie Alas.

Magnolia dropped to 6-7 and will have to face off against bitter rival Rain or Shine (7-6) on Saturday to decide which team gets a twice-to-beat advantage going into the quarterfinals.

The Sparks did very well from the charity lane in the last 39.6 seconds of the extra period, with Boyet Bautista, Jonathan Aldave and Fil-America Joe Devance all nailing two free throws each.

In the second game, Hapee-PCU salvaged something from a bleak conference by ending the eliminations with a 78-74 upset over semifinalist Montaña. The Jewels dropped to 10-3, while the Teeth masters closed out with a 4-10 record.

The scores:

First Game

TOYOTA OTIS 89—Aldave 19, Devance 16, Coronel 13, Casio 10, Bautista 8, Andaya 6, Daa 6, Rodriguez 4, Fajardo 3, Oreta 2, Alcaraz 2, Larong 0, Cabahug 0.

MAGNOLIA 85—Williams 28, Santos 22, Chan 11, Rizada 7, Isip 5, Misolas 5, Almeda 4, Co 3, Valenzuela 0, Barcellano 0, Te 0, Cutler 0.

Quarters: 18-11, 38-29, 58-49, 79-79, 89-85.

Second Game

HAPEE 78—Belga 15, Espinas 12, Castro 12, Moreno 9, Sanz 8, Bucao 5, Canlas 4, Garrido 3, Nailon 2, Solis 2, Razon 2, Amparado 2, Baculi 0.

MONTAÑA 74—Compton 16, Juntilla 12, Bono 8, Magpayo 8, Dela Cuesta 6, Rodriguez 5, Bonus 4, Vergara 3, Evangelista 2, Bagulon 2, Atablanco 0.

Quarters: 21-24, 35-47, 56-61, 78-74.

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Juvic 4 shots down in Macau

MACAU—JUVIC Pagunsan birdied three of the four par-5 holes for a one-under-par 70 yesterday in the first round of the $300,000 Macau Open at the Macau Golf and Country Club.

Pagunsan, who easily hurdled the Asian Tour qualifying, then won his first pro tournament at the Country Club in Laguna two months ago, posted nines of 33-37 and trailed first-round leader Marcus Both of Australia by four strokes.

The Filipino ace finished with five birdies against four bogeys and was tied for ninth place along with nine others.

Former Philippine Open champion Gerald Rosales shot a 72 on nines of 35-37, followed by Cookie La'O with a 73 (37-36).

But the three other Filipinos in the event serving as the last stop before next week's Philippine Open at Wack Wack will need low rounds today to survive the cut.

Jerome Delariarte struggled to a 77, Antonio Murakami had a 79 and Danny Zarate had an 81.

Taiwan's Lin Wen Tang trailed Booth by a stroke with a 67.

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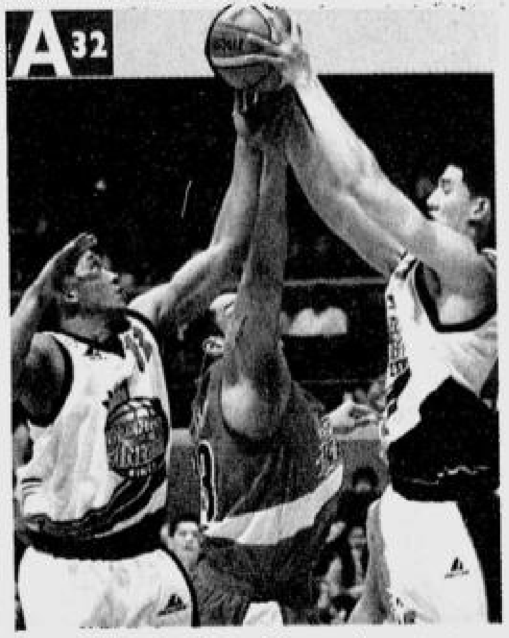


COCA-COLA'S Ali Peek (center) contests the rebound vs Jayjay Helterbrand (left) and Mike Holper of Ginebra Wednesday night. The Tigers won, 99-88. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Aces seek crucial win versus Beermen

COMING FROM A BIG WIN, ALASKA NOW looks forward to an outright quarterfinal berth and a winning streak of its own.

The Aces hope to achieve the twin goals when they take on the league-leading San Miguel Beermen at 4:40 p.m. in today's Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City.

Talk 'N Text and Sta. Lucia collide later at 7:35 p.m. with both teams desperately trying to finally snap out of losing runs.

Alaska coach Tim Cone's early worries about adjustments with the arrival of Willie Miller and John Ferriols seemed over after the new acquisitions combined for 16 points when the Aces drubbed the Realtors, 98-91, Sunday.

"I was right when I said that we're going to fall two steps behind because of the two new players on our team," said Cone. "But we expect to move forward in our next games since those two games are important."

San Miguel, which is also looking to extend its two-game streak, will enter the game already assured of an automatic semifinal slot. The Beermen booked their ticket to the next round after downing Coca-Cola, 95-92, last Saturday in San Fernando, La Union.

Although the underdog, Alaska is known to perform even better under pressure. During their win last Sunday, the Aces zoomed to as many as 22 points (77-55) in the third quarter before riding out the Realtors' big fourth-quarter run.

"Keeping our composure in the final stretch, that's something we have to work on," added Cone, who traded power forward Don Allado and the first round pick in the 2007 draft to acquire Miller and Ferriols.

Meanwhile, the Phones Pals attempt to stop their five-game slump and stay alive for an automatic quarterfinal slot, while the Realtors try to halt a two-game skid.

Meanwhile, for the first time in a year, the league returns to the Philsports Arena with a doubleheader set this Sunday.

The Purefoods Giants and Sta. Lucia Realtors meet in the 4:10 p.m. curtain raiser before the Red Bull Barakos take on the Coca-Cola Tigers in the main game set at 6:30 p.m.

The twinbill marks the first time the playing arena will be made available to the public since a tragic stampede befell the first year anniversary celebration of a noontime show that was supposed to be held at the venue last February.

Marc Anthony Reyes

STANDINGS	W	L
San Miguel	11	3
Purefoods	11	4
Red Bull	8	6
Alaska	7	7
Coca Cola	7	7
Ginebra	6	7
Talk 'N Text	5	9
Air 21	5	5
Sta. Lucia	3	11

GAMES TODAY
(*Ynares Center*)
4:40 p.m.—San Miguel vs. Alaska
7:35 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs. Sta. Lucia

No spoiling Santy victory ride today

By Musong R. Castillo

TAGAYTAY CITY—EVEN WITH HIS NATURAL MOUNTAIN-CLIMBING SKILLS, Frederick Feliciano could only finish just slightly ahead of overall leader Santy Barnachea in the back-breaking penultimate stage of the Tour Pilipinas yesterday.

And Feliciano wasted little time acknowledging the inevitable victory of Barnachea, who allowed his chief rival to slice only nine seconds from his huge overall lead at the end of the 147.4-kilometer Tagaytay-to-Tagaytay lap won by unheralded John Ricafort.

With an overall lead of 3 minutes and 58 seconds over Feliciano, Barnachea is expected to use the 75-km criterium final race in Marikina today as nothing more than a victory ride as Tanduay Padyak Pinoy bikathon champion.

"*Matagal kong pinag-handaan ito, salamat sa Diyos* (I worked long and hard for this, thank God)," Barnachea said before getting a warm, tight hug from fiancee Michelle, whom he will marry on June 18.

"*Lahat naman kami nagha-hangad na mag-champion sa Tour, ako lang ang pinalad sa awa ng Diyos* (All of us dream of winning the Tour, it just so happened that God blessed me this year)."

Feliciano, winner of the strength-sapping Baguio lap, attacked as expected but could gain little headway in the excruciating climb along "Sungay Road" in Talisay, Batangas, less than 10 km from the finish.

Barnachea, who later admitted to being "groggy," came up with one final push to check in alone at 15th spot for the day with a time of 3 hours, 49 minutes and 50 seconds.

Feliciano, 4:07 behind at the start of the day, checked in with the eight-man fifth group only nine seconds ahead of Barnachea, who later praised his main challenger for his gallant stand.

"Congratulations *din kay* Feliciano (I also congratulate Feliciano)," said the weary, tearful Barnachea at the finish.

The 29-year-old Ricafort broke down after securing his first career lap win with a time of 3:43:55 for the seventh stage that took the riders through the up-and-down roads of western Batangas.

Defending champion Warren Davadilla tried to salvage a lap win but came up short, finishing second for the day over Oscar Rendole, just 1:17 minutes behind Ricafort.

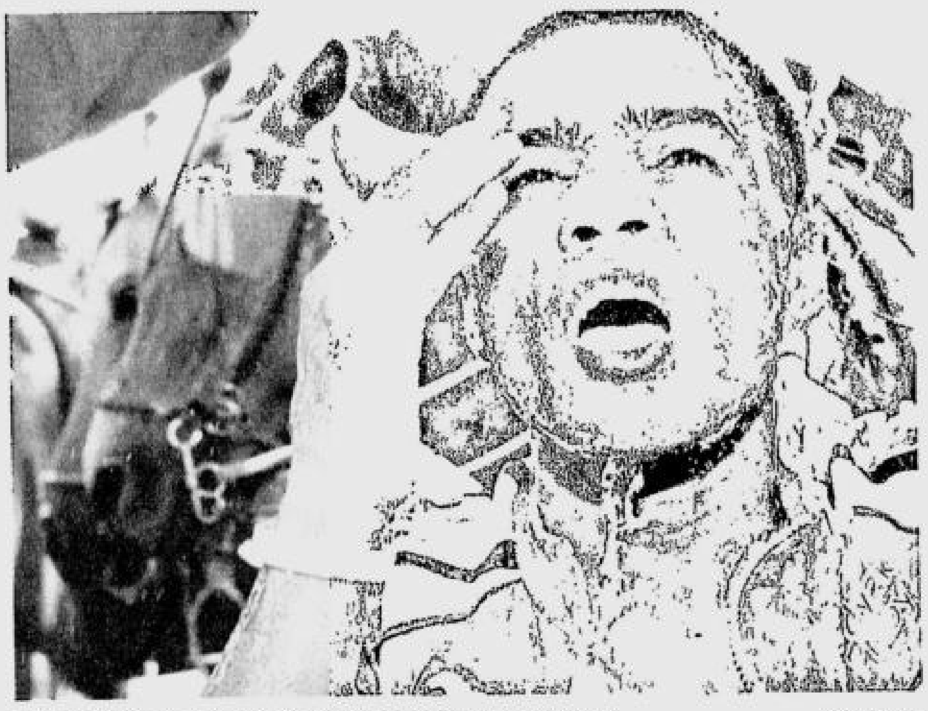
Also the champion in 1998, the 30-year-old Davadilla is doomed to finish fifth overall, exactly nine minutes off Barnachea's time of 29:18:39.

"He (Barnachea) rode like a true champion," Davadilla said. "He deserves it."

Ericson Obosa, the first stage winner and owner of the yellow jersey until after the La Union to Baguio third stage, stayed in third, 7:04 behind.

Rookie Irish Valenzuela, a member of the champion team Cossack Vodka, kept fourth spot, just 28 seconds ahead of Davadilla, with Tomas Martinez in sixth spot, close to 10 minutes behind.

Rounding out the Top 10 were Renato Sambrano in seventh (12:05), Harvey Sicam, another rookie (16:41), 2003 champ Arnel Quirimit at ninth (16:49) and Ricafort, who was just 18:53 off.



JOHN Ricafort gets a fresh splash after his stage victory. BOY CABRIDO

Cossack riders cop team title

TAGAYTAY—SKIPPER RENATO SEMbrano spearheaded a final-lap charge yesterday to power the Cossack Vodka Riders to the team title of the Tour Pilipinas Tanduay Padyak Pinoy 2006.

The Philippine team member checked in fifth in the punishing 147.4-kilometer grind from here and back as Cossack posted a total time of 118 hours, 35 minutes and 46.202 seconds after seven stages and a little over 1,100 kilometers.

It was worth P500,000 for the team members, who rallied from seventh place after the opening stage on Friday last week.

A jubilant Renato Dolosa, the Tour's 1992 and 1995 individual champion and Cossack coach, said his boys deserved to win because they worked together as a team.

Edgardo Ballezer arrived seventh for the day together with rookie Irish Valenzuela and Michael Reyes placed 22nd for the day as Cossack showed complete team domination of the stage.

Elixir Sports finished second overall, 10 minutes and 48.533 seconds behind and clinched the P400,000 runner-up purse. Air21 wound up 31:42.494 adrift for third and P300,000.

RESULTS AFTER STAGE 7

STAGE 7 INDIVIDUAL

1. J. Ricafort (Elixir Sports), 3:43:55
2. W. Davadilla (Mail & More), 3:45:12
3. O. Rendole (Inca), same time
4. D. Marana (Mail & More), 3:46:31
5. R. Sambrano (Cossack Vodka), 3:48:22
6. T. Martinez (Red Bull),3:49:14
7. J. Calderon (Red Bull),3:49:21
8. E. Ballezer* (Cossack Vodka),same time
9. E. Obosa (Inca), same time
10. A. Quirimit (Elixir Sports), same time
11. I. Valenzuela* (Cossack), same time
12. F. Feliciano (Air21), same time
13. P. Calosa* (OSW), same time
14. J. Guevarra* (Go21),same time
15. S. Barnachea (Sunbolt), 3:49:30
16. B. Sepmo* (Air21), same time
17. H. Mangahis (Sunbolt), 3:49:58
18. F. Sersenia* (Red Bull), same time
19. R. Esteban* (Red Bull), same time
20. R. Gorantes (Go21), 3:50:50
21. W. Calosa (OSW), same time
22. M. Reyes (Cossack Vodka), 3:51:20
23. E. Quinones (Go21), same time
24. J. Servino* (Go21), same time

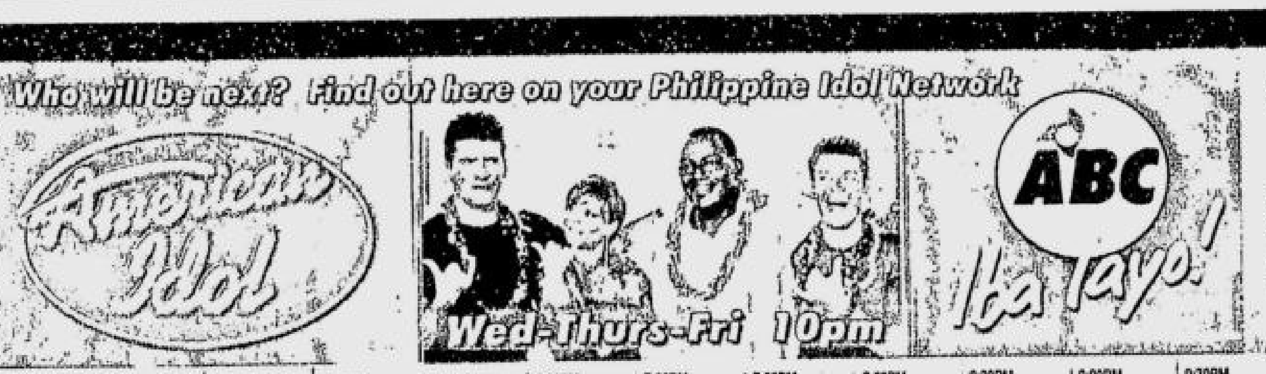
OVERALL INDIVIDUAL

1. S. Barnachea (Sunbolt), 29:18:39
2. F. Feliciano(Air21), 29:22:37
3. E. Obosa (Inca), 29:25:43
4. I. Valenzuela* (Cossack Vodka), 29:27:12
5. W. Davadilla (Mail & More), 29:27:39
6. T. Martinez (Red Bull),29:28:36
7. R. Sambrano (Cossack Vodka), 29:30:44
8. H. Sicam* (Elixir Sports), 29:35:20
9. A. Quirimit (Elixir Sports), 29:35:28
10. J. Ricafort (Elixir Sports), 29:37:32
11. J. Calderon (Red Bull),29:43:00
12. R. Gorantes (Go21), 29:43:06
13. E. Quinones (Go21), 29:43:42
14. M. Reyes (Cossack Vodka), 29:45:00
15. O. Rendole (Inca), 29:45:33
16. M. Aleonar (Air21), 29:55:44
17. P. Calosa* (One Shot Wonder), 29:58:12
18. D. Marana (Mail & More), 29:59:51
19. J. Guevarra (Go21), 30:05:03
20. H. Mangahis (Sunbolt), 30:07:15
21. E. Ballezer* (Cossack Vodka), 30:08:39
22. R. Navarro(One Shot Wonder), 30:09:01
23. B. Sepmo* (Air21), 30:14:53
24. M. Mendoza (Sunbolt), 30:19:13
25. J. Bautista* (Sunbolt), 30:21:59
26. A. Asuncion (Cool Pap), 30:22:51
27. J. Delica (Air21), 30:23:27
28. W. Calosa (One Shot Wonder), 30:24:09
29. A. Espino (Cool Pap), 30:24:10
30. J. Critativo* (OSW), 30:24:28
31. R. Clauna (Cool Pap), 30:25:04
32. R. Burgos* (Mail & More), 30:25:13
33. J. Torres (Elixir Sports), 30:28:50
34. A. Calpito* (Inca), 30:29:15

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Friday, May 19, 2006


Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
ABC
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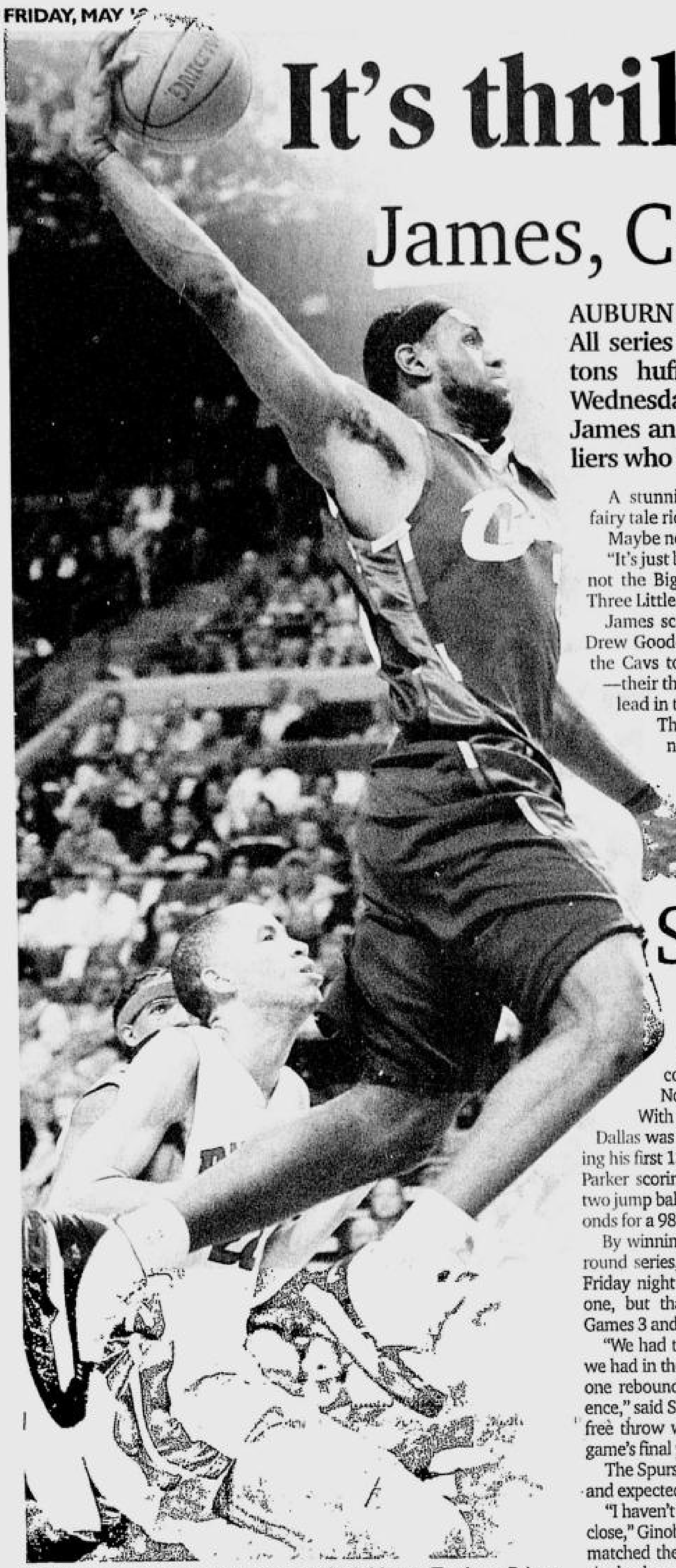
Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	Something About Miriam		Real Stories	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	Pinoy Big Brother E Buzz	Panday XXX	Wonderful Life	Gudtaym			Insider
AXN		When Animals Attack		Sports Disaster IV		Fear Factor (Season V)		The 4400 (Season 2)		Pensacola (Season III)		WRC 2006: Rally XS							Ronin
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Codename: Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Ina ka Ng Anak Mo				Pahiram Ng Isang Umaga				Pa-Siyam				Blade Of The Rose		Mahal, Saan Ka Nanggaling Kagabi?			
Cinemax	Glass Trap (2:20 PM)			The Guns Of Navarone (3:50 PM)					Beastmaster III: The Eye Of Braxus			Dead On: Relentless II			Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind			Hudson Hawk (11:15PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Surfaces		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Takedown	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice		Law & Order: Criminal Content		Crossing Jordan	
Discovery Channel	Connect	Extreme Engineering		Bachelors And Runaway Brides		Beyond Tomorrow		Stay Alive		Rides		American Chopper		How Do They Do It		Psychic Witness		Crime Night	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Unfabulous Bunny	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Inspector Gadget			Brandy & Mr. Whiskers	America's Funniest Home Video	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	The Rescuers	
ETC		American Dreams 3		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Joan Of Arcadia		American Dreams 3		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edison	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Trading Spouses		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edison
EWTN	The Good Code: The Natural Law	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	The Donut Man	Angel Force	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Backstage	The Gospel Of Life In Health	Defending Life	Life on The Rock Encore		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	Parable	EWTN Bookmark	St. Thomas Aquinas In Today's World	Fr John Corapi	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Snow White Sweet Love		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusan	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Love Of The Condor Heroes		Jewel In The Palace		Bubble Gang			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV (3:15 PM)		Angel's Point (4:05 PM)				Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II		Hustle		Jane Doe: Now You See It Now You Don't			Hustle (11:45PM)
HBO	Finding John Christmas			Mother (4:15 PM)				A Separate Peace			When Trumpets Fade			American Pie The Wedding			Eye For An Eye (10:40PM)		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Combatler V	Gundam Seed	Iron Man 28	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Memo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gundam Seed
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	TV Infomercial		Japan Video Topics		ME TV		PTA Best Of The Philippines		Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box				Megas XLR	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Always Sunny In Philadelphia	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	Reno 911	Insomniac W/ Dave Attell
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Interiors By Design	Decorating Style	Decorating Cents	Food Network Special		Ming's Quest	Intimate Portrait		Behind The Velvet Ropes	Martha		Simply Wine With Andrea Immer	The Great Adventure	Iron Chef America	
MTV Philippines		Boiling Points		[illegible]	Pop Inc		MTV Hits (with SMS)			Get Spotted	MTV Hits	MTV News	MTV Hits	MTV Diyes		Boiling Points		Sex Ed on the Beach	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXILOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Club MYX	MYX Versions	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	Nat'l Geographic Specials: [illegible]		Storm Stories: Thailand Tsunami	Rough Trades	In The Womb		Top 5 - World's Great Rainforests		WOW! Journey Into Amazonia: The Big Top		About Asia: Diva Mummy		Nat'l Geographic Specials: Escape Tech			Rough Trades	Explorer: Perfect Swarm	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alap			Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Ray Langit & Angelique Lazo	GSIS Member's Hour		Integrity Show Ombudsman			Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Fight Night 6				Huwag Mo Akong Iwan				In The Company Of Legends				Sa Iyong Mga Palad				Scenic Nights 2 Over The Green Fields
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zipang	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	Ganda Ng Lola Ko		News On Q	Love Life		Irene	
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	WWE Smackdown		World Poker Tour		The Ultimate Fighter		Newswatch Now	TV Greats On Friday		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Kaluwalhatian		Shepherd's Voice		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports						Boxing: 1st GAB Pro Boxing Awards Night				Sagupaan	NBA Jam	NBA Playoffs Conf. Semis Game 5					Solar Sports Desk	FIVB 2006 Dubai Women's Finals	
Sports Plus		This Is The PGA Tour		World's Greatest Auto Shows		Double Clutch 500 Highlights				Raceworld		Nopi Tunervision 12	Rookie Manual	BD Lake Powell	Wild Side	FIFA Preview Series 14	Golf Today	Inside the PGA	Bank of America Colonial Day 1
Star Movies	The Librarian: Quest For The Spear			The Engagement Ring (4:10 PM)			Tremors 3: Back To Perfection (5:40 PM)				The Triumph (7:25 PM)			Hostage				Commando	
Star World	Arrested Development	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	TNA Wrestling		The Collected [illegible] (Series 4)		NYPD Blue (Series 12)		Seinfeld	Walker Texas Ranger
Studio 23	Bewitched	Naruto				Dance Idol	Teen Titans	The Batman	Justice League Unlimited	Wazzup Wazzup	Barkada Nights			[illegible] (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

It's thriller night in playoffs



CLEVELAND superstar LeBron James (right) leaves Tayshaun Prince of the Detroit Pistons biting dust on the way to a slam dunk in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference semifinals. AFP

James, Cavs push Pistons to the brink

AUBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—All series long, the Detroit Pistons huffed and puffed. On Wednesday night, it was LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers who blew their house in.

A stunning role reversal on the Cavs' fairy tale ride?

Maybe not.

"It's just basketball," James said. "They're not the Big, Bad Wolf. And we're not the Three Little Pigs."

James scored 32 points and assisted on Drew Gooden's game-winning shot to lead the Cavs to an 86-84 victory over Detroit—their third straight win en route to a 3-2 lead in the second-round series.

The Pistons, on the brink of elimination after two straight trips to the NBA Finals, have not been giving much respect to the Cavs, who are in the second round for the first time since 1993.

That should change now, but will it be too late for the big, bad Pistons?

Game 6 in the best-of-seven series is Friday night in Cleveland, and if the Pistons force a Game 7, they will be back on their home court Sunday.

"LeBron is playing unbelievably, and they're playing with a lot of confidence," Detroit coach Flip Saunders said. "But it doesn't mean the series is over, we just have to revert to what we did for much of the season."

Ben Wallace blew a chance to give the Pistons the lead for the first time since early in the second quarter when he missed two free throws with 40 seconds left. That left one of the NBA's worst free-throw shooters 0-for-7 for the game, which remained tied at 84.

James deferred to Gooden on the ensuing possession, and the power forward came through with a low-post basket to put the Cavs ahead by two with 27 seconds left.

"I took a picture of the basket," Gooden said. "That's what my freshman coach in high school used to tell me, take my time and make the shot."

After a timeout, Donyell Marshall blocked Tayshaun Prince's shot in the lane and James tipped a rebound—off Lindsey Hunter's missed jumper—to teammate Eric Snow, who tossed the ball down the court to kill time.

The Pistons had the ball back with 1.9 seconds left, but could not get a shot off to try to force overtime—or win the game they didn't seem to deserve.

"That was about as perfect a game of basketball as you can play against that team," Marshall said.

Cleveland beat Detroit 74-72 and 86-77 to even the series after being routed in Game 1 and losing Game 2 by six points after a big early deficit.

After losing Game 3 in Cleveland, Rasheed Wallace guaranteed Game 4 would be the last game played there because the Pistons would close out the series in Game 5.

"Everybody wrote us off, but we started to get some confidence in the second half of Game 2 and we've just kept it going," Cavs reserve Damon Jones said.

Detroit hopes to draw from its postseason experience. Before the Pistons beat the Los Angeles Lakers in the 2004 NBA Finals, they fell behind New Jersey 3-2—with three straight losses—before winning on the road and at home to advance to the conference finals. *AP*

- **NBA on STAR SPORTS**—Phoenix vs LA Clippers (10 a.m. live, 7 p.m. replay)

Spurs' title bid alive and kicking

SAN ANTONIO—AFTER one wild, late loss, then another, the San Antonio Spurs could only shake their heads.

Now the Mavericks know the feeling.

With the conference finals in their sights, Dallas was turned away by Tim Duncan making his first 12 shots and scoring 36 points, Tony Parker scoring 27 and the Spurs withstanding two jump balls and two shots in the final 6.3 seconds for a 98-97 victory Wednesday night.

By winning Game 5 of this amazing second-round series, San Antonio forced a sixth game Friday night in Dallas. It'll be hard to top this one, but that's what everyone thought after Games 3 and 4.

"We had the mentality during this game that we had in the other games—one steal, one shot, one rebound, one basket has made the difference," said Spurs forward Manu Ginobili, whose free throw with 1:59 left wound up being the game's final point.

The Spurs knew they could still beat the Mavs and expected to do so once they returned home.

"I haven't seen four games that have been this close," Ginobili said. "This just shows how evenly matched these two teams are. It is crazy how a single play can decide the game."

The Spurs ended their first three-game losing streak of the season. By getting within 3-2 in the series, the Mavericks face the pressure of winning at home or having to return to San Antonio for Game 7.

"We didn't expect them to roll over," Dallas' Jerry Stackhouse said. "They're the world champs. They did what they're supposed to do. Every possession in the game meant something."

TIM DUNCAN'S hulking presence keeps San Antonio's hopes afloat. AP

The Mavericks had two chances to win in the bizarre final sequence, but Jason Terry missed a 15-foot fadeaway, then Dirk Nowitzki—who had 31 points, his high for the series—missed a tip-in chance at the buzzer.

Both players took the blame for the loss. Terry said he should've driven to the basket ("I settled right there. It's definitely my fault.") and Nowitzki lamented not catching the ball and putting it back up.

"I probably had enough time to take a shot," he said. "We didn't lose the game in the last two possessions. We had plenty of opportunities to win. It's a tough loss, but that's basketball."

Nowitzki's first 3-pointer of the series tied it at 95, and the ball was back in his hands with under 10 seconds left. That's when things turned wacky.

Nowitzki went up for a go-ahead 8-footer in the lane when Bruce Bowen—who surprisingly hadn't been covering him much all game—swept in from behind and put his hand over the ball. It was clearly a jump ball with 6.3 seconds left in the game and five seconds left on the shot clock.

"I was just fortunate enough to get my hand over the ball," Bowen said. "He was raising up. I think he felt he got enough space in between me and him at that point and he went to go pull up."

"We didn't want to go on vacation yet," Ginobili said. *AP*

Bonds 'Babe' run chase takes another vacation

HOUSTON, TEXAS—BARRY BONDS TOOK A night off from his pursuit of the all-time Major League Baseball home run record Wednesday but the San Francisco Giants completed a three-game sweep in Houston with a 10-1 romp.

Bonds sat out one night after being hit in the shoulder by a pitch from Houston's Russ Springer, who received a standing ovation as a result.

Nagged by accusations of steroid doping and numerous links to the BALCO steroid scandal, 41-year-old Bonds has been cheered only by home fans in his quest to match Babe Ruth for second on the all-time US homer list with 714.

Bonds, stuck on 713 for eight games, is idle Thursday as the Giants travel to Bay Area-rival Oakland, where Bonds is expected to play three games starting Friday as a designated hitter.

Battling nagging knee and elbow injuries, Bonds is signed only through next season but would likely need to play at least one more season to approach the all-time homer mark of 755 by Hank Aaron.

Bonds' agent has said he would consider offers for next year and an American League club like Oakland might be an answer rather than a National League club like the Giants.

American League clubs defeature designated hitters at the plate instead of pitchers while National League teams force batters to pitch. AL clubs would give Bonds a chance to swing for the fences without fielding if he plays in 2007. *AFP*

BONDS: Hit in the shoulder. AFP

LeBron, Shaq, Kobe make all-NBA squad

NEW YORK—CLEVEland Cavaliers forward LeBron James was the leading vote-getter on the All-NBA first team, which included Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant and Phoenix Suns guard Steve Nash.

Dallas forward Dirk Nowitzki and Miami center Shaquille O'Neal rounded out the first team, announced Wednesday by the league.

James, who averaged 31.4 points, 7.0 rebounds and 6.6 assists in leading the Cavaliers to their first playoff appearance in eight years. Michael Jordan, Oscar Robertson and Jerry West are the only other players in NBA history to average at least 31 points, seven rebounds and six assists in a season.

James received 116 first-place votes and 610 total points from the panel of 126 media members.

Bryant, who led the league with 35.4 points a game, was selected to the team for the fourth time. He scored 50 or more points six times this season

Nash, who won the MVP award for the second straight season, led the league with 10.5 assists. Nowitzki averaged a career-high 26.6 points and lead the Mavericks with 9.0 rebounds.

O'Neal made the team for the seventh straight season and the eighth overall. He averaged 20 points, 9.2 rebounds and led the league in field goal percentage (60 percent) for the ninth time, tying Wilt Chamberlain for the most all-time. *AP*

O'NEAL REUTERS

NASH AP

World Cup: Japan sees 'fishy' omen

YOKOHAMA—IF THE FORECASTS are to be believed, Japan's players in next month's World Cup are small fish in a big pond.

An aquarium in Yokohama is organizing a piscine World Cup, in which fish the colors of national teams fight for a ball packed with bait in a tank holding two goalposts.

It's not the best showing for the home team.

Japan—whose blue jerseys on the football field are represented in the tank by Blue Palette Surgeonfish—seem to have less fighting spirit than Brazil, played by Yellow Tang.

"The Blue Palette Surgeon tend to stay at a corner of the fish tank while Yellow Tang is more active," said Osamu Masubuchi, a spokesman for the Hakkeijima Sea Paradise in Yokohama, south of Tokyo.

Asian champions Japan has been drawn in a tough group at the World Cup including five-time champions Brazil, Croatia and Australia.

The match is held twice a day at feeding time at the aquarium's aqua museum.

The aquarium will later feature fish bearing the colors of other teams.

"As it is the time of the season for excursions by schoolchildren, they are cheering for the fish," Masubuchi said. *AFP*

FC Barcelona rules Champions League

SAINT-DENIS, FRANCE—WITH ALL THE stars on the field, no one thought Juliano Belletti would be the one to make the difference in the Champions League final.

Not even Belletti.

But the Barcelona right back came on the field with 19 minutes to go Wednesday and soon scored the deciding goal to give the Spanish champions a 2-1 win over 10-man Arsenal to win Europe's most prestigious club competition.

Arsenal, which played with 10 men from the 18th minute after goalkeeper Jens Lehmann was red-carded, took the lead in the 37th at Stade de France when Sol Campbell headed in the first goal.

Samuel Eto'o equalized for Barcelona in the 76th minute, and Belletti scored the winning goal in the 81st.

Henrik Larsson found Belletti on the run, and the Brazilian charged through the Arsenal defense and sent his angled shot off replacement goalkeeper Manuel Almunia and into the net for his first goal in a European competition.

"Scoring a goal in the Champions League is very difficult for a full back," Belletti said. "I thought this afternoon that perhaps I would have played, but I knew it was difficult. The Champions League is for all the people who don't appear in the press. It's for everyone."

Arsenal, which was playing in its first Champions League final, lost Lehmann when he brought down Eto'o just outside the Arsenal area.

Still, Arsenal took a 1-0 halftime lead after Campbell headed in Thierry Henry's free kick.

Henry squandered a chance to add a second goal, shooting straight at Barcelona goalkeeper Victor Valdes in the second half.

It was a disappointing homecoming for Henry, whose team had gone a Champions League record 10 games without conceding a goal. And the France striker was furious with Norwegian referee Terje Hauge.

"I don't know if the ref had a Barcelona shirt on or something," Henry said. "If they don't want us to win it, just say it right from the start." *AP*

BARCELONA'S Juliano Belletti celebrates his crucial goal. AFP

Bernis regains Samsung lead by one stroke

LIPA CITY—JUN BERNIS BOUNCED BACK with a 3-under par 69 yesterday and needed a double bogey by Paul Echavez on the 18th hole to regain a one-stroke lead heading into the final round of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour at the Summit Point and Country Club.

Bernis, a former national amateur champion, bucked a double bogey on No. 3 to tame the tough par-72 layout with six birdies. That 69 boosted him back on top with a 213 aggregate. He led the field with a 71 after the first round.

Echavez, who also fired a 69 to grab the 36-hole lead, actually padded his lead to five with three birdies after nine holes only to sputter coming home with a 40 and a 73.

The 17-year-old Echavez, now training under the National Caddies Open program, bogeyed Nos. 11 and 15. He dropped out of the lead when he needed two extra shots before holing out on the 18th.

Kim Chang-hoi, the former champion of this annual event sponsored by Samsung, matched Bernis' 69 and moved up to third with 218. He would need to come up with a stronger final round to have a chance of nailing the crown.

Otherwise, it would be a two-man affair in the chase for top honors in this second leg of the five-stage circuit, backed by Taylor Made, C-Lium Fibre, Microtel, Titleist and Custom Clubmakers/KZG, Sunbolt.

Gary Sales struggled with a 74 and fell into a tie with Ronnie Torrecampo (73) at 222 while Joseph Labajo shot a 75 and shared sixth place with jungolfer Gino Bunyi at 225.

The three other survivors were Lee Dong Geun (76-226), Rufino Bayron (76-226) and Chris de los Santos (79-229).

Meanwhile, Yoon Sung-bin shot a 73 to take a two-stroke lead over Mandred Guango (75) in Class A of the men's division of this tournament supported by Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9 and 99.5 RT, Sports Plus as partners. Michael Mendoza stood three shots behind with a 76.

Benny Hurtado came up with a 75 to post a four-shot Class B lead over Virgilio Abanilla, Jr., Allan Alegre and VJ Vasandani, who all had 79s.

BACK ON TOP: Jun Bernis hacks out of deep rough.

Gahol keys Taguig five win over Pangasinan

BRYAN GAHOL PLAYED THE HERO'S ROLE IN the clutch as Forward Taguig outlasted the resilient Pangasinan Hundred Islands, 80-74, Wednesday night in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the CP Tinga gym in Taguig City.

Rysal Castro topscored with 17 points but it was Gahol, filling in for a still injured Marc Victoria, who delivered the key blows for Mayor Freddie Tinga's Taguig cagers.

With the scores tied at 55, the former Red Bull Barako banged in eight straight points for a 63-55 Taguig edge before Pangasinan staged its own mini rally to come within 61-63, 5:31 to go.

It became a shootout between Gahol and Pangasinan's Elvis Tolentino going into the last two minutes with Hundred Islands still breathing down Taguig's neck, 67-68, with 51.5 seconds left.

From there, Gahol, Castro and Louie Abad put all the stops before allowing Tolentino to peg the final count as the buzzer sounded.

Cotta binge continues

Earlier, defending champion Ozamiz Cotta started its northern swing on a high note by blasting winless Laguna-Sta. Rosa of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro and Mayor Joey Katindig, 102-74.

Taguig and Ozamiz tightened their lead in the northern and southern divisions, respectively, of the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Taguig raised its record to 5-2 while Ozamiz improved to 6-1.

The scores:

OZAMIZ 102—Basco 19, Guerrero 12, Yabut 12, Liangco 12, Cavan 11, Alberto 11, Samplio 10, Bansil 6, Lapera 4, Ilanga 2, Libatog 2, Alvarado.

LAGUNA 74—Domingo 12, Nuqui 11, Natividad 9, Intano 9, Vivero 8, Aquino 7, Nolasco 6, Alminario 6, Prior 4, Baylon 2, Sy 0.

Quarters: 32-22, 58-41, 83-59, 102-74

TAGUIG 80—Castro 17, Gahol 14, Abad 9, Reguera 9, Legaspi 9, Gragasin 7, Dulay 5, Constantino 4, Patrimonio 4, Uy 2, Lustestica 0.

PANGASINAN 74—Tolentino 18, Aquino 12, Yambao 9, Rol Menor 8, Ico 8, Tiongson 7, Catacutan 4, Rom Menor 4, Balares 2, Ruiz 2, Cortel 0.

Quarters: 26-18, 41-36, 55-55, 80-74

Asian beach football stint for RP squad

MEMBERS of the RP team with delegation head and coach Mike Athab (extreme left, standing).

THE PHILIPPINES HAS EARNED the right to represent Southeast Asia in the first FIFA-organized Asian qualifying tournament on May 22 to 26 in Dubai, where the top three finishers will compete in the World Cup Beach Football Championships in Brazil later this year.

The Asian teams will be joined by their counterparts from Europe, North America, and South America. Brazil won the world invitational championship it hosted last year.

Bracketed with Japan and Iran, the Philippine team, made up mostly of Army and Air Force players, needs at least a win to have a chance to qualify. The teams in the other group are China, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates.

The team will be headed by Beach Football Association of the Philippines president Mike Athab.

"The Philippines was selected by FIFA to represent Asia because of our long history of playing beach football," said Athab. "I believe we have good chances of qualifying despite the fact that Japan placed fourth in last year's world championship."

The RP team, which is also supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, is made up of Ali Bernard Go, Nestorio Margarse Jr., Victorino Troyo, Luisito Brillantes, Wilson de la Cruz, Richard Betita, Philip Cesar Caballero, Eduard Sacapano, Dan Araneta, Joebel Bermejo, Emerito Caligdong, and Winnie Subere.

RP junior netters advance

SEVENTH SEED THE PHILIPPINES lost to No. 2 Japan, 0-3, but finished second in its group yesterday and advanced to the quarterfinals of the World Juniors Tennis Championships Asia-Oceania zonal qualifying tournament at the Pusat Tennis Kemayoran court in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The Filipinos picked their second win at the expense of Singapore, 3-0, before losing to the Japanese, who topped Group 4 with a 3-0 record.

The RP squad of Francis Casey Alcantara, Akio Sy and Kim Ivor Saraza, will next face top seed China.

Unseeded New Zealand, unbeaten in Group 3, will meet sixth seed Indonesia, third seed India will battle fourth seed Chinese Taipei, while Japan will challenge No. 8 Korea.

SPORTSWATCH

US, Aussie bets join int'l cockfest

SEVEN MORE FOREIGN COCKERS FROM THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRALIA, Japan, Malaysia and Guam have signed up for the first SJC 9-Cock International Derby slated June 5, 7 and 9 at San Juan Coliseum. Roger Roberts of Georgia, the 2004 World Slasher Cup champion, led the foreign breeders who signed up for the derby, sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, yesterday. Also on the list are OW Lanier of Texas, Peter Uren of Australia, Sidfrey Linsangan of Guam, Riochi Saito of Japan, SK Wong of Malaysia and Emitte San Juan of California. Pit manager Pete Rivera said he expects the number of entries to top 100.

80 fights rostered in Pasay derby

EIGHTY FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN THE "RS FAIRVIEW 4-COCK DERBY WHICH gets going at 6 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit. The derby is sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 30000 and hosted by Roger Segismundo, a consistent player in Metro Manila's derby circuit. Among the participants are Lito Orillaza, William Co, Pepito Ngo, Benjie Lim, Tony Lasala, Rey Briones, Capt. Emil Chua, Amor Salvanera, Manny and Arman Santos, Ramon Mancenares, Richard Bates, Jake Macasaet, Efren Canlas, Bobby Doromal, Boy Layag and the Madlambayan brothers. For inquiries, call 843-1890 or 843-1746.

Weigh-in for SJC special 5-cocker today

A SELECT FIELD OF TOP COCKERS SEE ACTION TOMORROW IN A SPECIAL 5-cock derby hosted by cocker-sportsman Tony Antonio at San Juan Coliseum. Official entry names and weights (1.8 kgs. to 2.4 kgs.) must be submitted today from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. only. For inquiries, call 725-5369 or 0917-8041691. Last Wednesday, the Makisig entry of Boy Royo and Against All Odds of Gerry Ramos shared the championship of the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-cock derby with five points each.

The Tejada case: Is GAB remiss in its duty?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

DO WE NEED STRICTER REGULATION OF basketball? Absolutely.

The serious neck/spinal cord injury suffered by PBA player Eugene Tejada of Purefoods last Sunday was a grim reminder of the danger inherent in contact sports like football, wrestling, boxing and basketball.

Catastrophic injury with prolonged disability, paralysis or even death rarely happens, though, in the dash-and-dribble game.

The common injuries associated with basketball include finger dislocation or fracture, thumb sprain, ankle sprain, groin-muscle sprain, "runner's knee," shin splints, shoulder dislocation, hematoma under toenails, contusion, abrasion and laceration.

Tejada, a Filipino-American cager who was born in Daly City, California, was set to undergo surgery yesterday at the Makati Medical Center to realign his dislocated spinal cord. Two days ago, Tejada's motor function in his arms returned, but still he couldn't move his legs or wiggle his toes.

Oddly, Tejada's case did not receive much attention from the Games and Amusements Board. Why? Isn't the GAB supposed to step in and assure the fans and the players that every promotion under its aegis, the Philippine Basketball Association in this case, is safe?

Isn't the GAB supposed to require the promoters to have a standby ambulance and doctors at the playing venue? Why did it take too long for medical help (from Lifeline Arrows) to arrive (some 40 minutes more or less) at the Ynares Sports Center in Antipolo City?

PBA commissioner Noli Eala said, "While it is provided in our contract that a standby medical team and an ambulance would be in the PBA's playing venues (at) all times, the circumstances brought about by the recent typhoon "Caloy" inadvertently prevented full emergency provisions for the PBA."

I called the office of GAB chair Eric Buhain twice (on Wednesday and Thursday) to get a reaction, but the secretary said his boss was out attending a meeting. At any rate, I hope the GAB will not take the Tejada case lightly and sidestep the issue. Is it only when a terrible accident such as this happens that sports authorities are forced to move? And then, when the rage is over, what is left?

***

It's something to crow about. Former PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino has been named basketball commissioner of the NCAA, once the country's most glamorous school league. A genuine sportsman, Bernardino is the best choice to give vim and vigor to the association which is celebrating its 82nd season. This year's host is College of St. Benilde.

The 58-year-old Bernardino has vast experience in basketball. He became the fifth PBA commissioner in 1994, learning the ropes from four commissioners before him, namely Leo Prieto, Mariano Yenko, Rudy Salud and Rey Marquez. He resigned from the PBA in 2002 for health reasons, but being a workaholic, Bernardino simply would not walk away from sports.

A former varsity player of the UP Maroons, Bernardino introduced several changes in the PBA. In his first year, he improved the quality of officiating, modified the 25-second shot clock and instructed the referees to give more leeway to the defensive player.

Bernardino also took steps to make the league more wholesome by meeting with members and officials of the various fan clubs of the teams, asking them to refrain from cursing or hurling invectives at the referees and players of the opposing teams.

***

There are many Filipino athletes, living or dead, who are worthy of emulation, but only a handful have been showered with international acclaim. One of the elite few was the late tennis champion Felicisimo "Totoy" Ampon. Only 5-foot-3, Ampon stood 10 feet tall, playing in many major tennis tournaments around the world, including the Wimbledon in London. At Wimbledon, Ampon topped the Plate Series, a tournament among the first and second round losers, defeating Heraldo Weis of Argentina in the final played at court No. 1. Queen Mary awarded the winner's trophy to Ampon at the Queen's box at center court.

"They gave me a standing ovation and I had goose pimples all over," Ampon said in a post-game interview way back in the 1970s. "The crowd was elated to see an Asian win the Plate Series, a first in the history of Wimbledon."

The British media called him the "Mighty Atom" for that sterling performance at Wimbledon.

Then at the French Open at the world-renowned Roland Garros courts, Ampon went as far as the quarterfinals, where he faced No. 1 seed Frank Sedgman. After five nail-biting sets, Sedgman beat Ampon, 4-6, 6-3, 6-8, 7-5, 7-5.

Spring cagers sweep Picaa Open

SPRING COOKING OIL SUBDUED King's Bakeshop, 70-66, Wednesday night to retain the Picaa Open basketball crown via an unprecedented sweep at the EAC gym in Manila.

Marvin Yambao and eventual MVP winner Aldrin Morante sparkled for the Cooking Oil Masters of national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla by delivering the goods when it mattered most.

Yambao scored six of his team-high 13 points in the payoff period, while Morante joined Danny Capobres in holding off King's Bakeshop's rally late in the third.

"We're very happy to win the title again," said coach Efren "Yong" Garcia. "The boys played hard all the way until the end."

Padilla praised his charges for their hard work and determination.

Spring Cooking Oil swept all its assignments in the two-round tournament sponsored by Manila Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna, Chloe Lightings and Tomish Café (Dapitan).

The Cooking Oil Masters led by as many as 16 points but King's Bakeshop refused to give up without a fight. King's closed in at 59-62 with 1:05 left behind an 8-2 run triggered by Rommel David, but Gilbert Neo nailed a three-pointer from the side to make it 65-59.

King's threatened anew at 63-66 with only 12 seconds remaining but Mario Reyes and Mark Yee canned four free throws to seal Spring's triumph.

Earlier, Pearl Hotel-Emilio Aguinaldo College finished third by beating Homer Cagers, 94-86, in overtime.

The scores:

SPRING 70—Yambao 13, Morante 12, Bamson 9, Neo 8, Yee 6, Manuel 6, Tiongco 5, Reyes 4, De Castro 4, Capobres 3, Cuenca 0.

KING'S 66—David 19, Palaganas 16, Bernardos 8, De Guia 7, Litonjua 6, Zablan 3, Marucot 2, Mendiola 2, Gadiano 2, Corbin 1.

Quarters: 13-18, 38-30, 53-44, 70-66

SKIPPER Rodel Manuel receives the Picaa trophy from Jules Castillo, press officer of Manila Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna. In the middle is Picaa commissioner Orly Bauzon.

Reyes outlasts Orcollo for 4th straight victory

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—FILIPINO HALL OF Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes turned back compatriot Dennis Orcollo, 11-8, Wednesday to remain in the winner's bracket of the $160,000 Enjoypool.com 9-Ball Championship at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in this gambling mecca.

STILL IN WINNERS' ROW: Efren "Bata" Reyes

With his fourth victory in a row, the 51-year-old Reyes forged a clash with Poland's A. Roshkowski who pulled off a similar 11-8 win against Satoshi Kawabata of Japan.

Reyes, already the winner of the IPT King of the Hill 8-Ball Shoot-out in Florida, last December, the Derby City Classic in Kentucky last January and the kickoff leg of the 2006 San Miguel Asian 9-ball Tour in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, recently, is the only other Filipino left in the thinning ranks of the winners' bracket.

Jose "Amang" Parica, the Philippines' finest player in the 1980s before migrating to the US, is scheduled to face Johnny "The Scorpion" Archer of the US in the winners' side Thursday.

Should he hurdle Roshkowski, Reyes will face the winner between Ralf Souquet of Germany and Corey Deuel of the United States on Thursday.

The American posted back-to-back wins over Niels Feijen of the Netherlands, 11-6, and Filipino Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat, 11-7, Wednesday.

Santos Sambajon became the latest Filipino to be ousted from the tourney that offers $20,000 to the champion and $10,000 to the runner-up.

Sambajon took his second defeat at the hands of Davis Reljik, 11-3, in the losers' bracket.

Reljik next faces Ernesto Dominguez of Mexico who nipped Masaki Tanaka of Japan, 11-9. The winner will clash with Orcollo.

Luat will battle the winner between Marcus Chamat of Sweden and Fabio Petroni of Italy.

If Parica wins, he will collide with the winner between Thorsten Hohmann of Germany and Charlie Williams. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

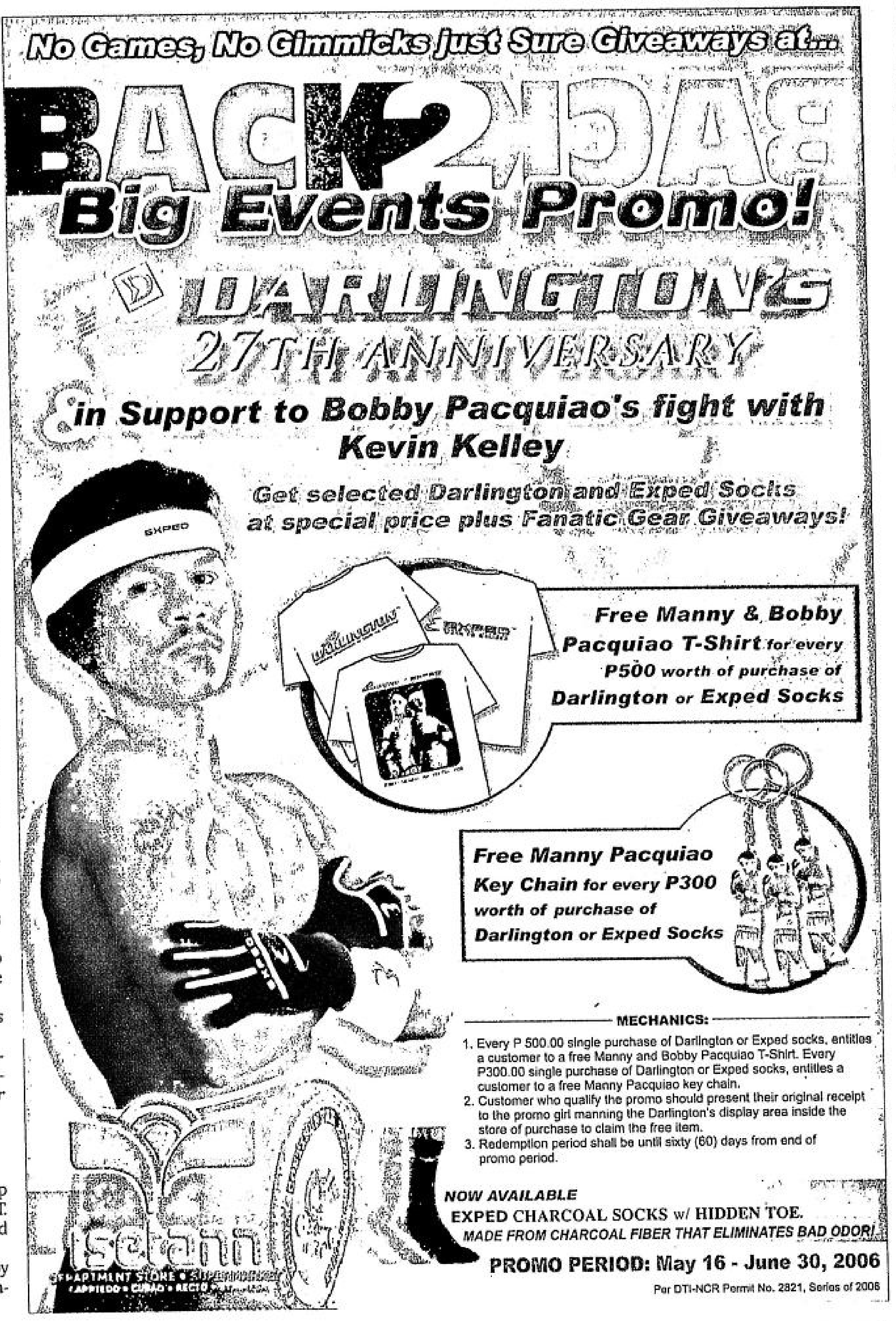
TM-ABAP stint in Guagua, Pampanga

THE BIGGEST NAMES IN THE PHILIPPINE boxing team strut their wares as the Touch Mobile-ABAP Go for Gold brings its act to Plaza Burgos in Guagua, Pampanga, today.

Olympians Harry Tañamor and Violito Payla banner a star-studded cast composed of gold medalists in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

"Expect non-stop action from the first bout up to the final bout," said Abap president Manny T. Lopez, who thanked Mayor Ricardo Rivera and Coucilor Richard Melencio for their support.

Sponsored by Touch Mobile and supported by Pacific Heights, the TM Go for Gold is the country's lone nationwide boxing on wheels.



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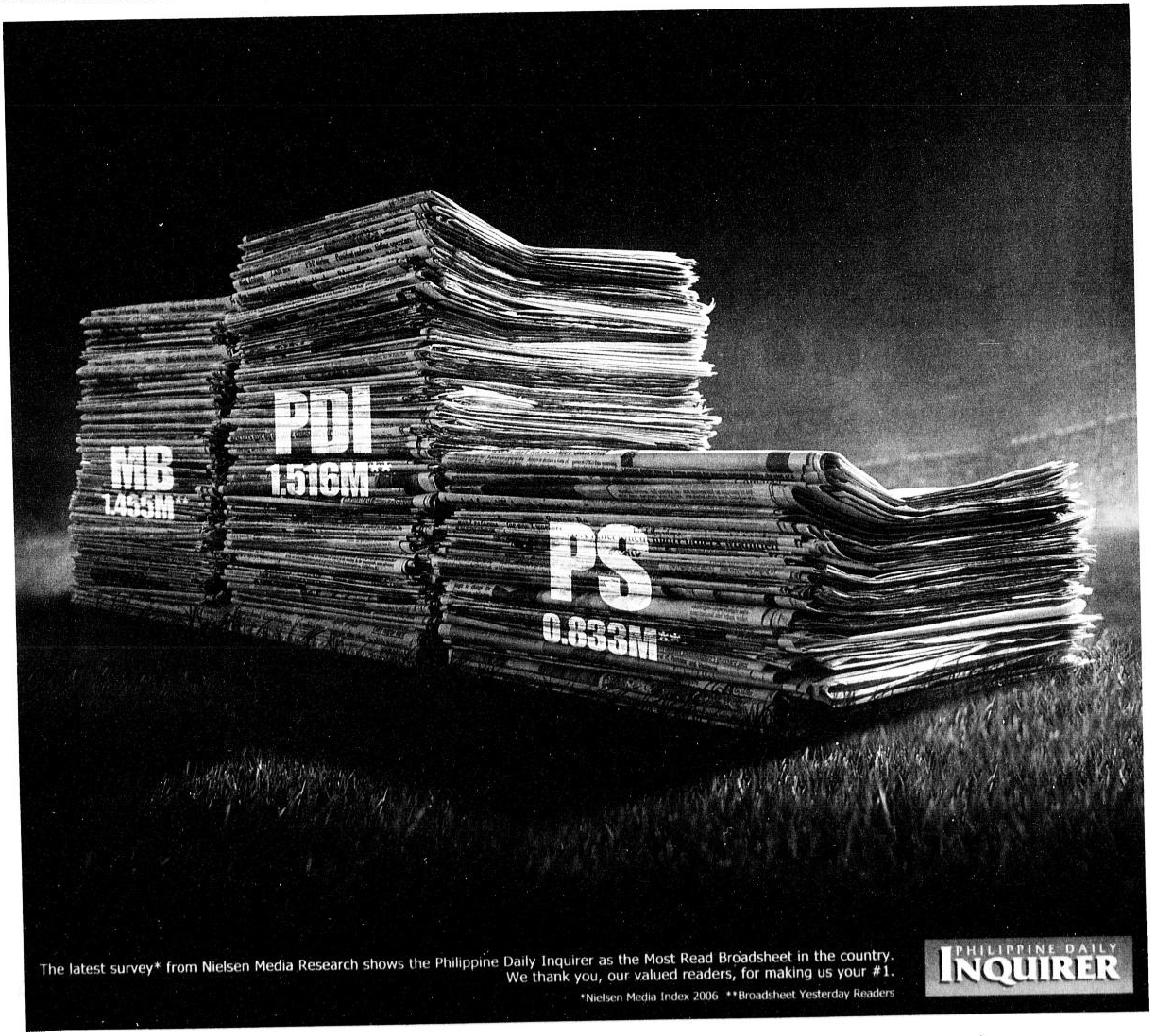

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

2 RP-Korea finals cap NTCC today

By Jong Arcano

GEN. TRIAS, CAVITE—IT'S ALREADY MIND-BOGGLING FOR SOMEONE LIKE Tootsie de Jesus to have reached a single-digit handicap in just 18 months of playing golf. Winning the National Tournament of Club Champions will make him feel like a magician.

MATCHES TODAY (*8 a.m.*)
Ladies final: Vinice Godio vs Kwon Ye-seul
Men's final: Park Jong-soo vs Tootsie de Jesus

Defying great odds, De Jesus of Tagaytay Highlands put himself on the brink of a major victory when he edged Zaldy Villa of Valley on the last hole to arrange a showdown with dreaded Korean Park Jong-soo of Eastridge for the men's division crown at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club course.

The 27-year-old Park, whose family has been in an out of the country since he was 8, recovered from a sluggish start to dominate Edmund Yee of Manila Southwoods in the back nine and cruise to a 4&3 victory for a place in the final of the tourney co-presented by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. and INQUIRER Golf.

Teener Kwon Ye-seul of Eagle Ridge threatened to make it an all-Korean affair by holding off Kathleen Uy of Cebu Country Club for a 2&1 win in the ladies division semifinals.

Kwon meets Vinice Godio, representing Alabang and Sta. Elena, in the final. Godio, making good her promise to reach the title duel after a heartbreaking loss in the semis last year, outclassed young Cyna Rodriguez, 4&2, in a duel the jungolfer was expected to win.

The 18-hole finals starts at 8 a.m. with the protagonists returning to the Faldo course after going through the rigors of the Dye, Aoki and yesterday at the Norman side of the country's biggest golf complex.

Sponsors of the NTCC are Sta. Lucia Realty, Callaway as the official apparel, Isuzu the official vehicle, Titleist the official ball, PAL the official carrier, Chivas Regal, The Travel Club and Pacific Air Media. Platonic, the first locally assembled golf cart, is hole-in-one sponsor.

The winners today will get the chance to witness two HSBC-sponsored events in England and the United States while the losers settle for a choice of a premium driver plus a trip for two to any local destination. All players had earlier won other items for each match they won including putters, Titleist balls, The Travel Club bags.

Villa suffered a defeat that will take some time to forget.

Battling his foe tooth and nail all day, Villa brought his match with De Jesus to the 18-hole all square. But Villa hooked his drive into the hazard not just once but twice and practically had to yield the match off the tee.

Win or lose against Park, De Jesus believes that he has achieved more than what he expected: "I'll just try to have as much fun tomorrow, knowing Park is such a good player."

De Jesus now carries a handicap of 6, barely a year and a half after picking up the game. He plays under the tutelage of pro Antolin Fernando at Wack Wack and credits his meteoric improvement to his strict discipline of playing as often as he could.

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Gibson hopes to end slump at RP Open

KUALA LUMPUR—CANADIAN STALwart Rick Gibson hopes a timely return to Wack Wack Golf and Country Club for next week's Philippine Open would end his recent slump in form.

The 44-year-old veteran, who has lived in Manila for the past 17 years, was the winner at Wack Wack's fabled East course when the Philippine Open was last staged there in 2002.

A week before the Open's 90th edition, Gibson is pushing hard for history to repeat itself.

Four years ago, he entered the Open following a three-year hiatus but came out on top of the heap with a four-stroke victory at Wack Wack.

It was the second wind that he was looking for in an illustrious career that includes nine other titles across Asia and Japan, as well as in Canada.

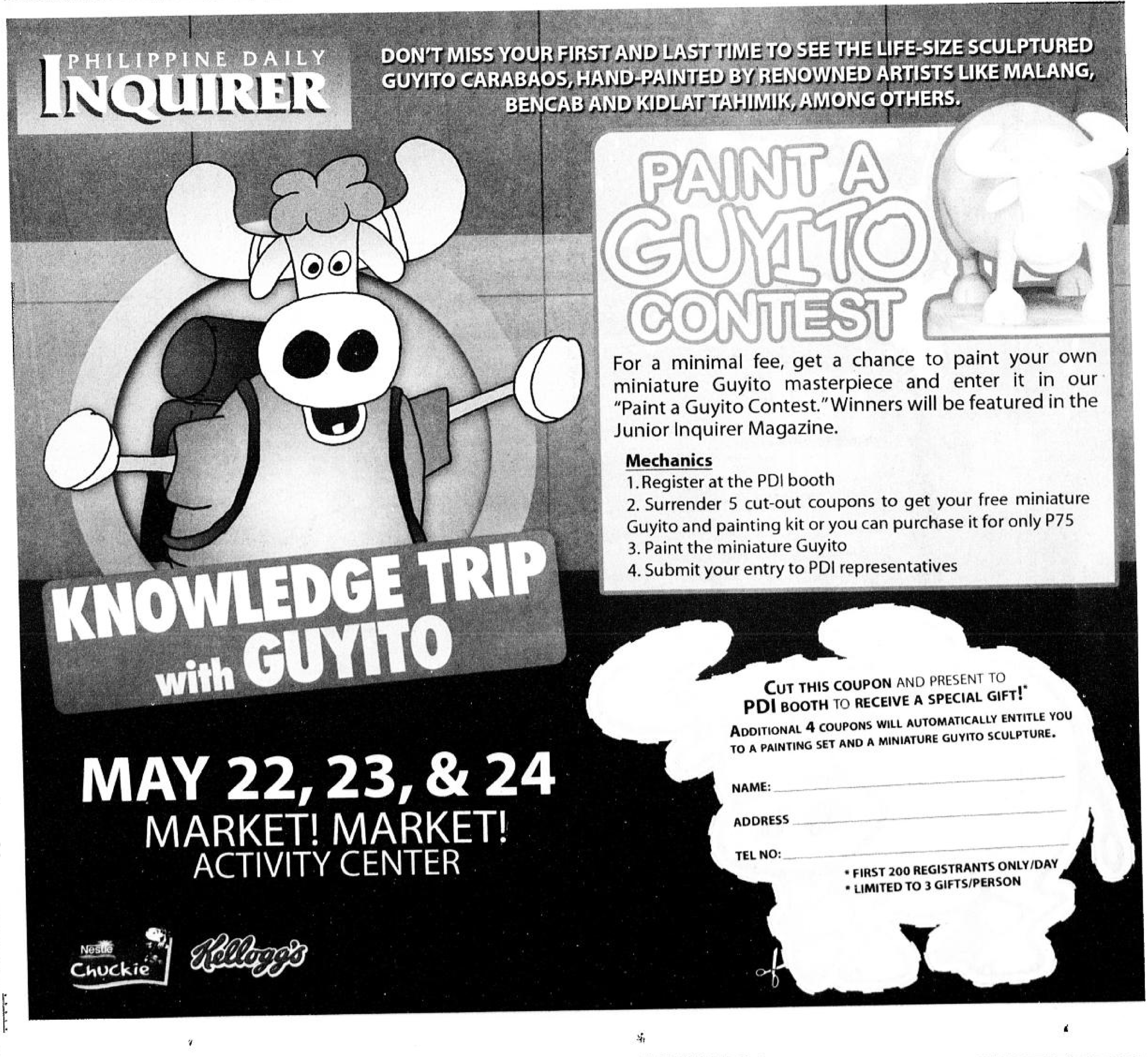
But he has made only three cuts from 10 tournaments this season.

Australian Adam Le Vesconte will defend his title next week, The top Filipinos who will challenge for the title include Angelo Que, Gerald Rosales, Juvic Pagunsan and Felix Casas.

There will not be any sale of tickets at the Philippine Open and spectators are welcomed to attend the 90th edition of the Championships.

The Asian Tour will also be producing a special two-hour highlights package of the event which will be shown across the region via ESPN StarSports.

GIBSON: Looking for second wind



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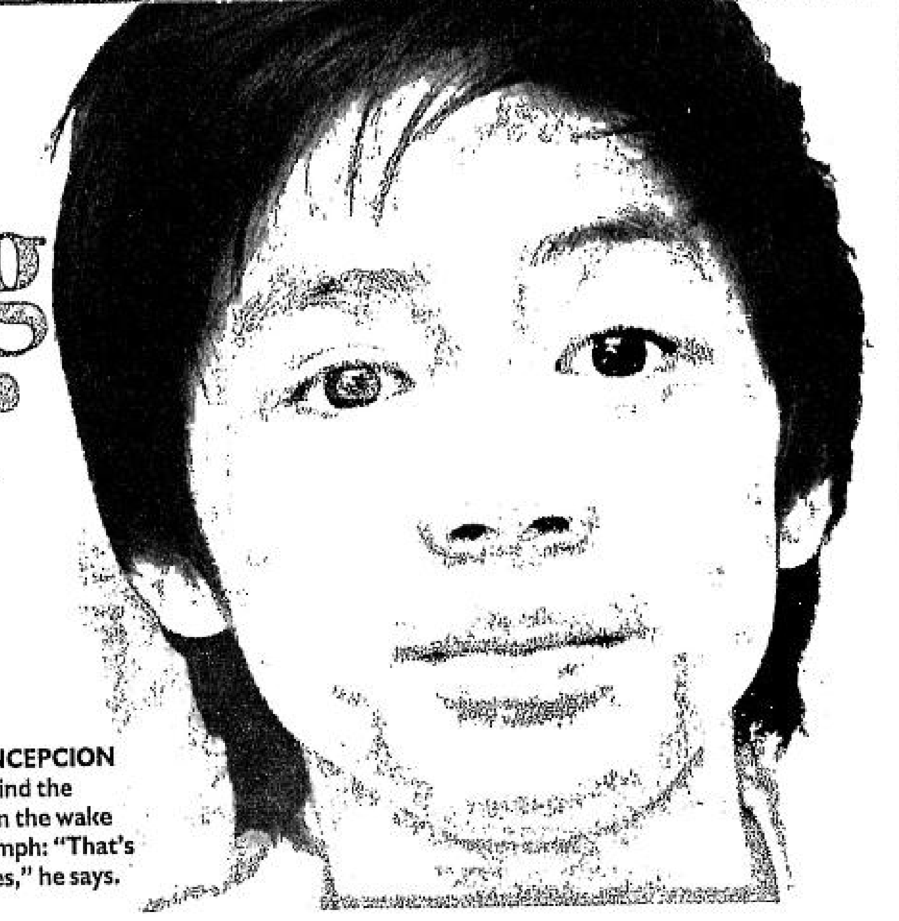
Face of a young winner

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff
Photos by Rudy Esperas



SAM CONCEPCION doesn't mind the criticism in the wake of his triumph: "That's how it goes," he says.

SAM CONCEPCION ONLY shrugs when people ask about some televiewers' negative reaction to his winning the grand prize in ABS-CBN's recently concluded talent search, "Little Big Star (Big Division)."

Sam's voice changed drastically in the course of the six-month competition (he's at that awkward stage, only 12 when he joined). The "critics" found Sam's performance inconsistent, and rooted for another contestant.

"Okay *lang po sa akin 'yun*. It's really like that in contests. There were people who wanted Gian (Carlo Barbona) or Charice (Pempengco) to win. But many wished me luck, too," a self-assured Sam told INQUIRER Entertainment.

Prior to "LBS," Sam was in the youth-oriented program "Sineskwela" on ABS-CBN and then "Astig" on ABC 5. He hosted Nickelodeon's "Whacked" and Kids Choice Awards in 2004 and 2005.

His first big break came in 2002, when he played the young protagonist in "Sino Ka Ba, Jose Rizal?" a production of Musical Theater Philippines. Months later, Sam played Edmund Pevensie in Trumpets' highly successful production of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

Sam is managed by Stages, the same team behind the career of singer Christian Bautista.

The young champ is currently busy with other programs like "Super Inggo and "Y Speak Live" on ABS-CBN. Officially, he said, Friday is his "rest" day, "*pero nasisingitan pa rin po ng* work."

And no, he hastily added, "I'm not complaining *po*."

And so it was on a Friday afternoon, clad in striped polo-shirt and ripped blue jeans, that Sam walked into the INQUIRER office for this interview. If he felt like it was work, he didn't show. He was unguarded, engaging and bubbly... and well, refreshingly young.

He talked about the "cool stuff" he won from the contest, friends he made, and the girl of his dreams.

Did you personally pick your winning song ("I Can't Stand Still" from the musical "Footloose")?

Tito Carlo (Orosa), *Tito* Audie (Gemora), *Tito* David (Cosico, his manager) and my dad—did. They're like a team.

Do you get formal training?

I've been with Trumpets since I was 8 or 9. Now, I'm 13. I was in Trumpets Playshop (workshop) for five years. I took up musical theater, street dancing and voice lessons with Teacher Lannie (Ligot), street dancing with the Maneouvres and Chinnie Nepumoceno.

I've done musicals—"The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe," "Mr. Noah's Big Boat"—and some corporate shows.

How did this help you in "Little Big Star"?

It helped a lot. I was comfortable on stage. It also helped in my singing and dancing. Although right now my voice is changing *kaya mahirap*.

How do you balance school and work?

I was absent a lot during "Little Big Star." My school (Christian Academy of Manila) helped me cope. My teachers gave me make-up quizzes and make-up homework.

I'm an incoming second year student.

What did you win as "Little Big Star" champ?

P1 million—minus 20 percent tax—a trip to Hong Kong Disneyland, franchise of a line of cologne and gifts from sponsors worth P30,000.

What will you do with all that money?

Still planning. I still don't have it. I might buy a van or a car, or just save it.

TAKE FIVE

How's your interaction with fellow contestants?

We'll still be part of "Little Big Star Season 2"—*si* Makisig (Morales), Kyle (Balili) and Rhap (Salazar) and then me, Charice and Gian. We'll be performing every Saturday.

Would you rather do TV or theater?

Pareho lang po.

Who are your mentors?

Tito Audie, *Tito* Carlo, *Tito* David and everyone from Stages.

What do they always tell you about performing?

To try to connect with the audience, to perform for them.

Did you expect to win?

Okay *na rin po kami kahit* third.

Who cheered for you the loudest?

My fans—the Samsters.

Are they mostly girls or boys? How old are they?

They're a mix. The youngest are 7 and 8 years old. *Mas marami 'yung* 13 years old. The oldest members are school principals, mommies and daddies. Global *po ang* membership. It has a website on Pinoy Exchange.

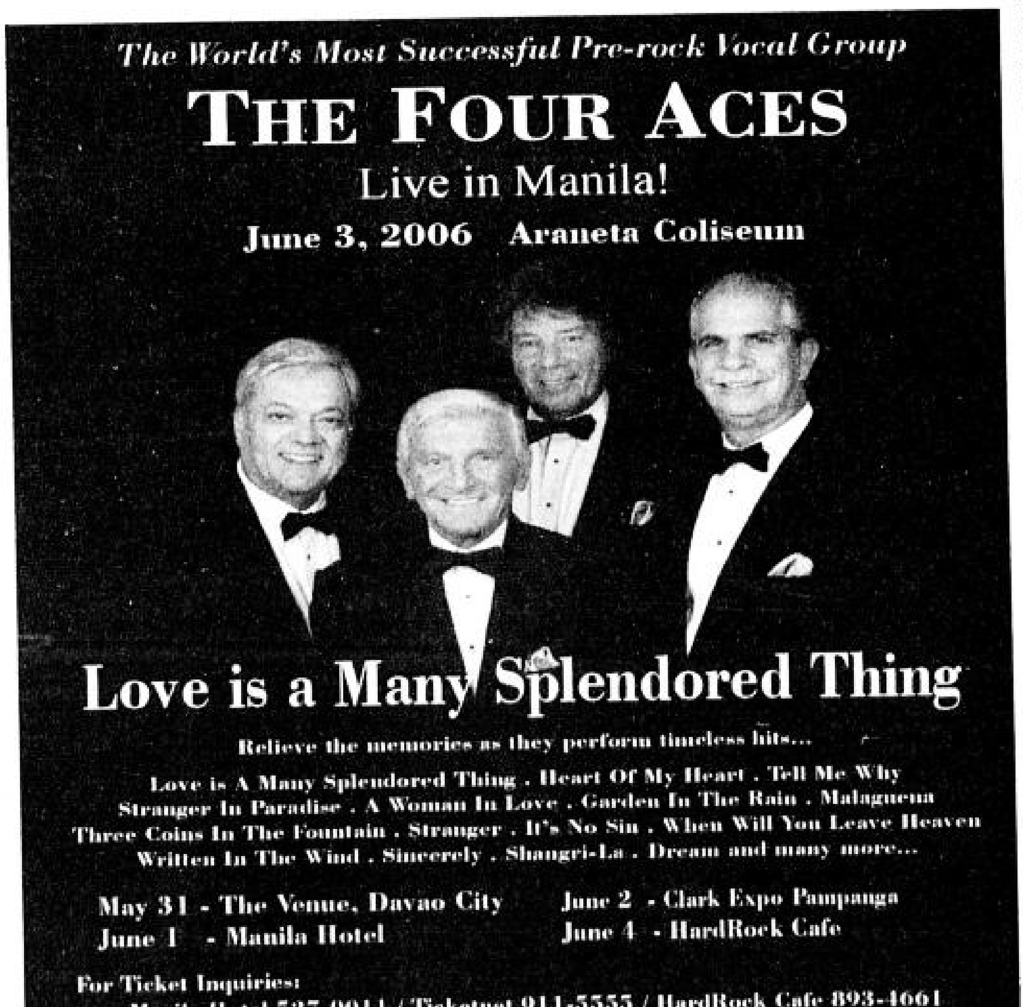
Weren't you the rapper on that Magi Sinigang sa Miso commercial?

Opo. I was 10 or 11 then. *Mas marami pong* commercials *ang* Daddy *ko kaysa sa akin.*

Do you have brothers or sisters who also act?

Yes. We're four in the family, I'm the third. Everyone is involved in theater. My mom and my dad met at the Metropolitan Theater. My eldest brother, Red, is also a theater actor. My second brother, Kevin, is also in Trumpets Playshop. The youngest, Gem, 9,

FACE/ A2-4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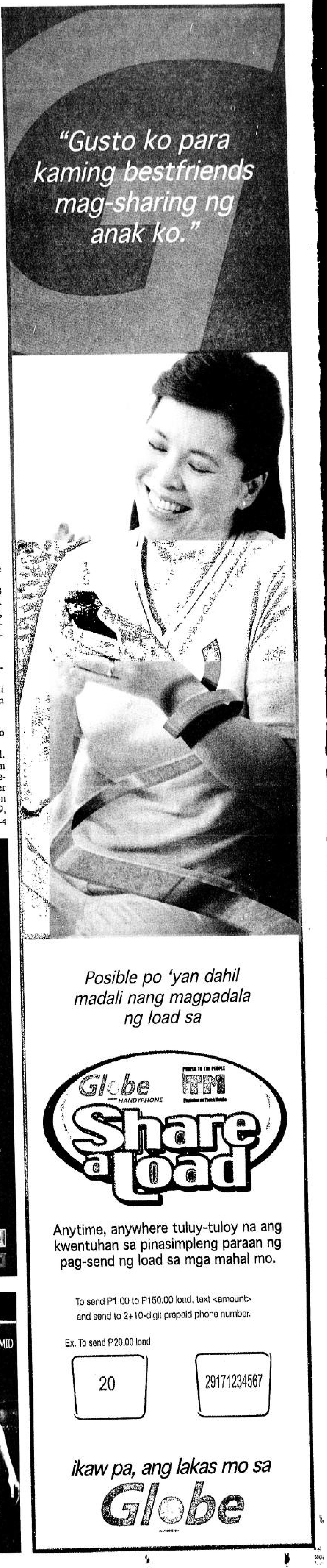
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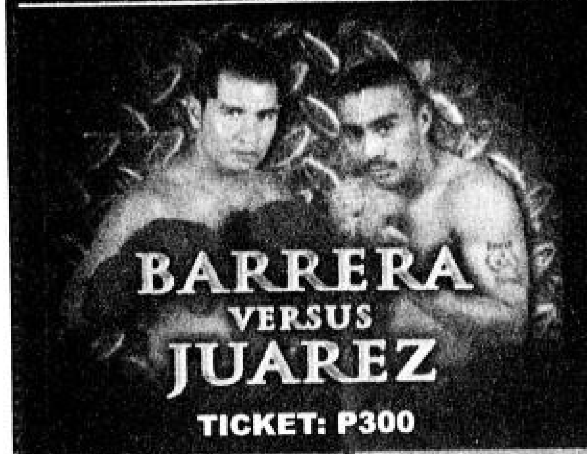

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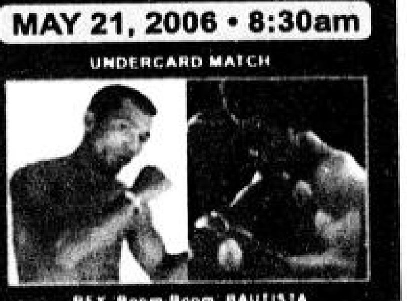

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REINCARNATION
POSEIDON
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SILENT HILL
M:i:III
THE WILD
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

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POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
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M:i:III
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AQUAMARINE
POSEIDON
M:i:III

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M:i:III
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POSEIDON

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SILENT HILL
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M:i:III
THE WILD
D LUCKY ONES
APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR

SM CITY STA. MESA
POSEIDON
OVER THE HEDGE
M:i:III
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D LUCKY ONES
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POSEIDON
REINCARNATION
OVER THE HEDGE
M:i:III

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M:i:III
SILENT HILL
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D LUCKY ONES

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SM CITY SOUTHMALL
POSEIDON
OVER THE HEDGE
M:i:III
M:i:III
SILENT HILL
PAMAHIIN
AQUAMARINE
REINCARNATION
D LUCKY ONES

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
POSEIDON
REINCARNATION
OVER THE HEDGE
M:i:III

SM CITY SUCAT
SILENT HILL
POSEIDON
M:i:III
POSEIDON

EVENT CALENDAR
SM CENTER Stage
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hale 1 Night to go!
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SATURDAY
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SYRIANA
M:i:III
OVER THE HEDGE

SM CITY MARILAO
SENTINEL
M:i:III
OVER THE HEDGE
POSEIDON

SM CITY BACOOR
PAMAHIIN
M:i:III
POSEIDON
OVER THE HEDGE
M:i:III
REINCARNATION
D LUCKY ONES
SILENT HILL

SM CITY BATANGAS
SILENT HILL
POSEIDON
M:i:III
OVER THE HEDGE

SM CITY LUCENA
SHE'S THE MAN
M:i:III
OVER THE HEDGE
POSEIDON

SM CITY CLARK
NOW OPEN
POSEIDON
AQUAMARINE
M:i:III
SILENT HILL
OVER THE HEDGE
AMERICAN SOLDIERS

SM CITY PAMPANGA
M:i:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
AMERICAN SOLDIER
AQUAMARINE
OVER THE HEDGE

SM CITY MOLINO
M:i:III
POSEIDON
OVER THE HEDGE
REINCARNATION

SM CITY STA. ROSA
BANDIDAS
OVER THE HEDGE
POSEIDON
M:i:III

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
M:i:III
POSEIDON
OVER THE HEDGE
SUBMERGED
GRANDMA'S BOY
D LUCKY ONES
M:i:III
POSEIDON

SM CITY ILOILO
SENTINEL
RESERVED
OVER THE HEDGE
M:i:III
AMERICAN SOLDIERS
POSEIDON
RESERVED
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POSEIDON
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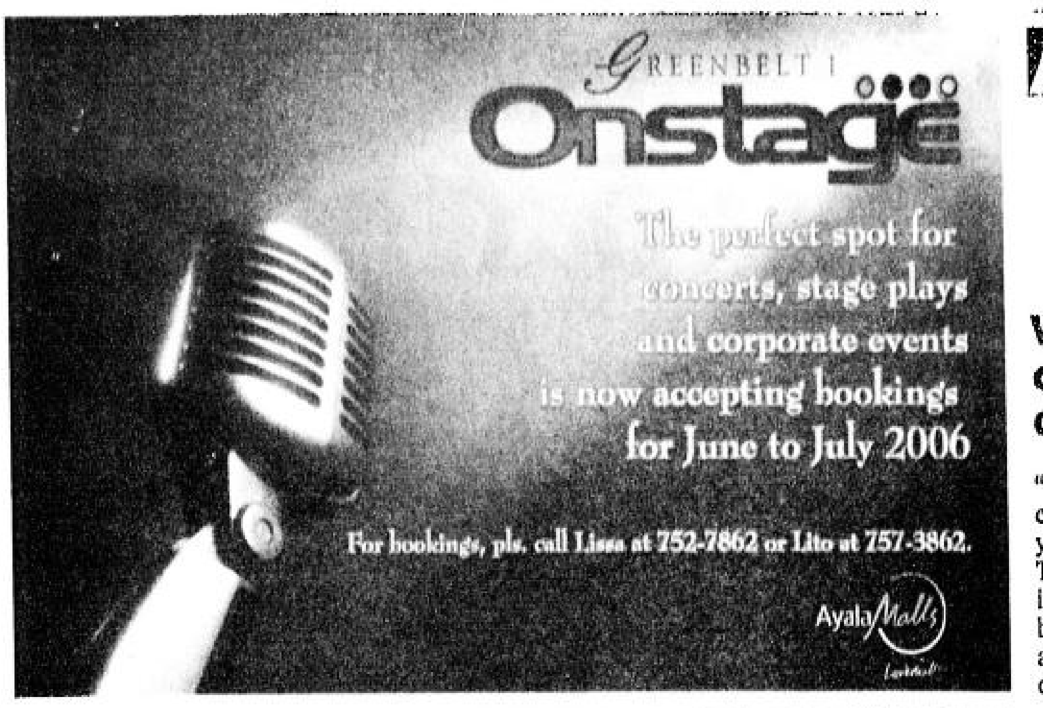

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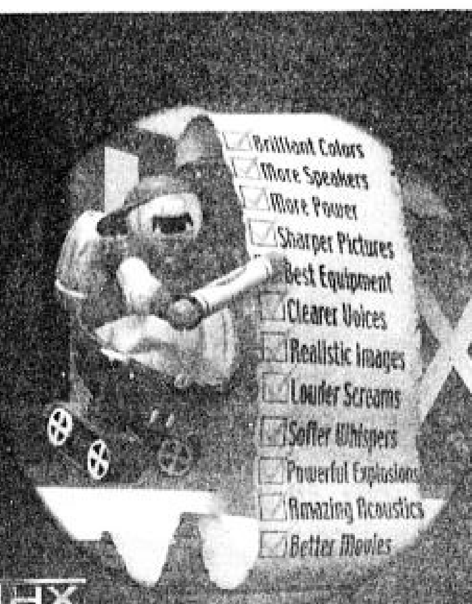

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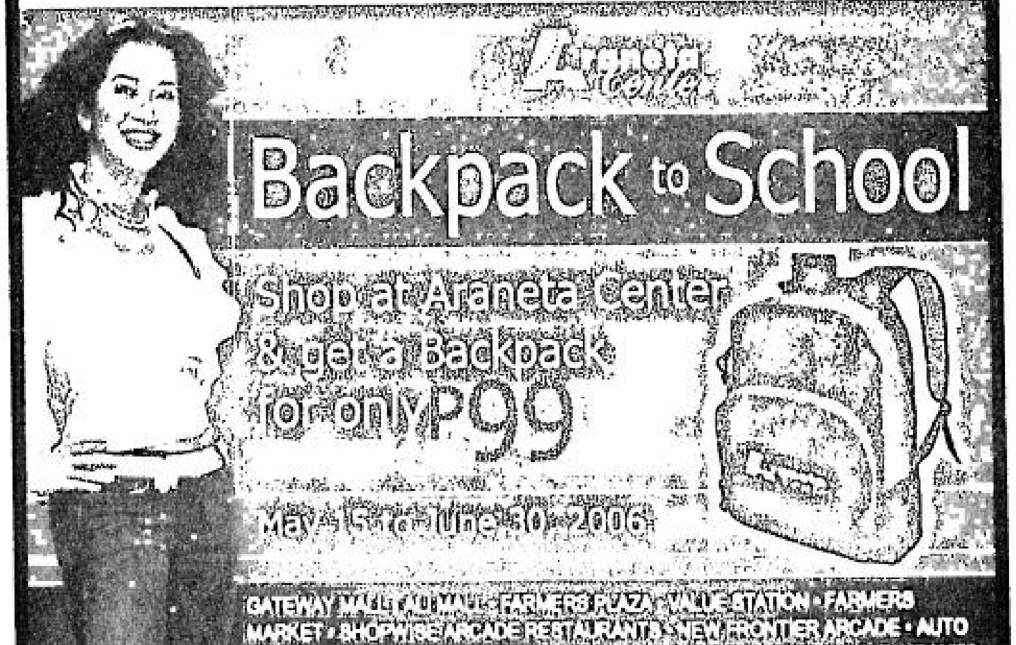
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OVER THE HEDGE 1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00	SILENT HILL 7:00 / 9:40		THE DA VINCI CODE 12:25 / 3:25 / 6:25 / 9:25

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1	THE DA VINCI CODE 12:05 / 3:00 / 5:55 / 8:50	THE DA VINCI CODE 12:05 R3 / 2:20 / 5:15 / 8:10		MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: 3 12:00 / 2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00
4	OVER THE HEDGE 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00 / 8:00	POSEIDON 12:10 / 2:15 / 4:20 / 6:25 / 8:30		DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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Winston concert continues

"WINSTON IN CONcert" continues its yearlong "Wings Tour 2006," tonight in a show that topbills Parokya ni Edgar at Tarcisius Bar in Lucena City.

Dubbed the "Pambansang Banda ng Pilipinas," Parokya will perform the hits off their latest platinum album on Universal Records label, "Halina sa Parokya."

Tonight

Barbie Almalbis at the Araneta Coliseum with guests Kitchie Nadal, Rocksteddy, Ney of 6Cyclemind and Hannah Romawac of Session Road; 8 p.m.

Troy Montero at Ratsky Malate

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Tomas Morato

Dave at Suburbia

The Jerks at '70s Bistro

Tomorrow

Kim Flores at the La Salle Gym in Bacolod

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Malate

Family Fun Game Show with Ruby Rodriguez at Metropolis Star Alabang; 4 p.m.

Cynthia Alexander at '70s Bistro

May 21

Ara Mina at Ratsky Morato

Dasmariñas

May Villar at the Manila Pavilion Hotel's Boulvar Lounge

DID YOU KNOW...

Simon picks Taylor Hicks

NEW YORK—SIMON Cowell predicts the gray-haired Taylor Hicks will be the next "American Idol."

"I'm going to say he's the favorite, but what do I know?" Cowell, one of the TV singing competition's three judges, told Jay Leno on NBC's "Tonight Show" on Monday.

Cowell had earlier predicted that rocker Chris Daughtry, who was booted off "Idol" in an upset last week, would be among the show's three remaining finalists.

Finale

Instead, along with the 29-year-old Hicks, an Alabama native, the remaining contestants on the Fox program are Katharine McPhee and Elliot Yamin.

Cowell expects Yamin to be the next to go, resulting in a Hicks-McPhee face-off on May 23-24. Cowell thought McPhee, 21, should have been voted off last week.

"But [now], you know, she's got a fighting chance."

Yamin, 27, has a fan in judge Paula Abdul.

Last week, Abdul told Teen People magazine, "I am going to be honest with you—I want Elliot to win." *AP*

WIREIMAGE

ENGAGED Oscar-winning actress Nicole Kidman, ex-wife of actor Tom Cruise, is engaged to marry country music star and Grammy 2005 winner Keith Urban, his spokesperson said on Tuesday. Both are 38, and Australians. REUTERS

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1	OVER THE HEDGE	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 9:05, 11:10	GP
2	THE DA VINCI CODE	12:40, 4:00, 7:25, 10:50	R-18
3	THE DA VINCI CODE	11:40, 2:50, 6:10, 9:40	R-18
4	POSEIDON	1:30, 3:55, 6:20, 8:45, 11:10	PG-13

SHANG CINEPLEX

① OVER THE HEDGE
MTRCB GP
1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 10:10PM LMF

② THE DA VINCI CODE
MTRCB R-18
1.20, 4.25, 7.30.10 35PM LMF

③ THE DA VINCI CODE
MTRCB R-18
12.30, 3.35, 6.40, 9.45PM

④ THE DA VINCI CODE
MTRCB R-18
11:45, 2.50, 5.55, 9.00PM

PREMIERE THEATRE POSEIDON MTRCB: PG-13
1.00, 3.15, 5.30.10.00

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THE DA VINCI CODE R18 1:15,4:15,7:15,10:15	POSEIDON PG13 12:20,2:40 POSEIDON PG13 5:00,7:30,10:00	THE DA VINCI CODE R18 11:30,2:15,5:15

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4 THE DA VINCI CODE 10:55, 1:55, 4:55, 7:55, 10:50 R18
5 THE DA VINCI CODE 10:20, 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:20 R18

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MUSIC MUSEUM

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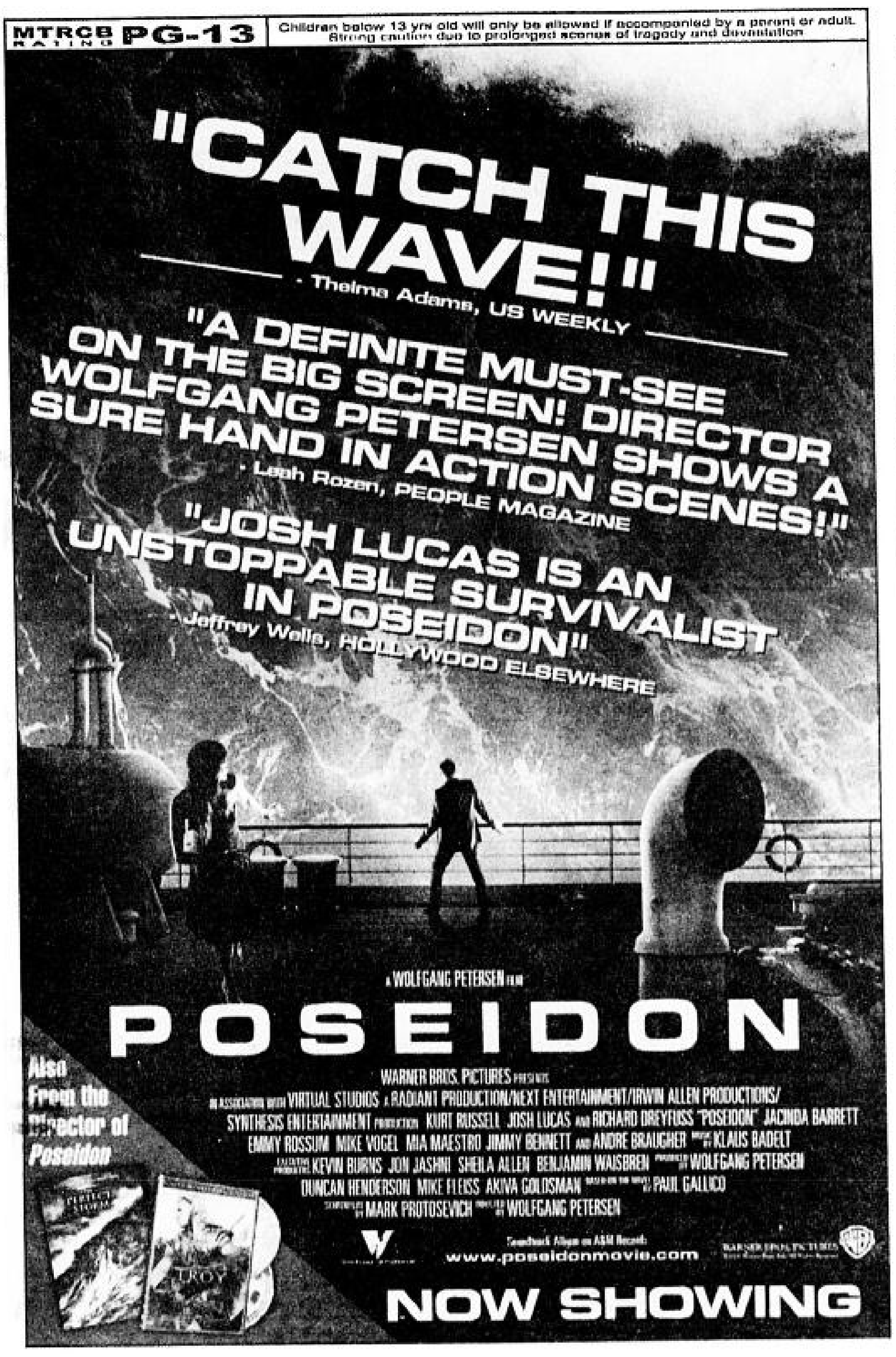
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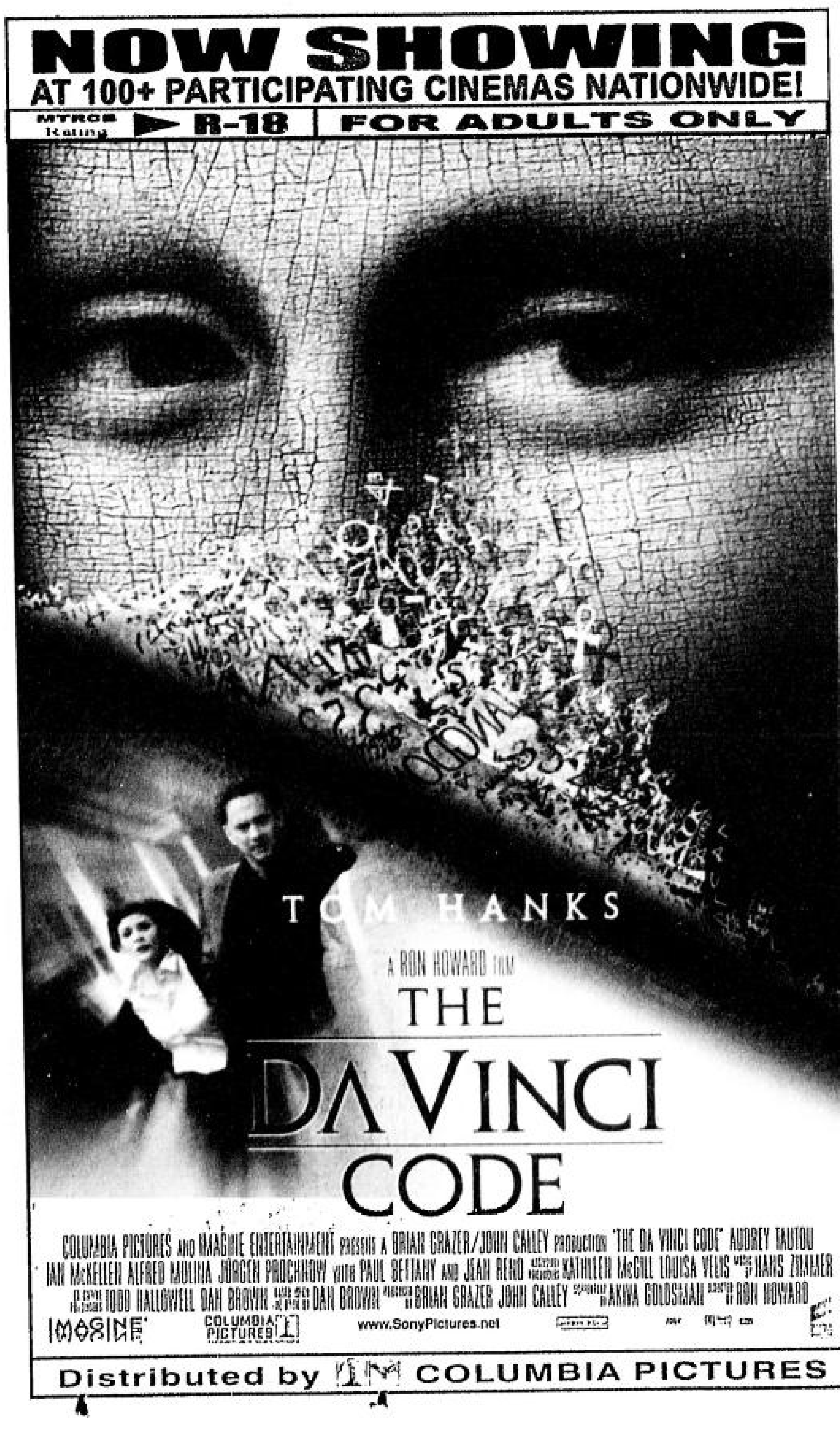
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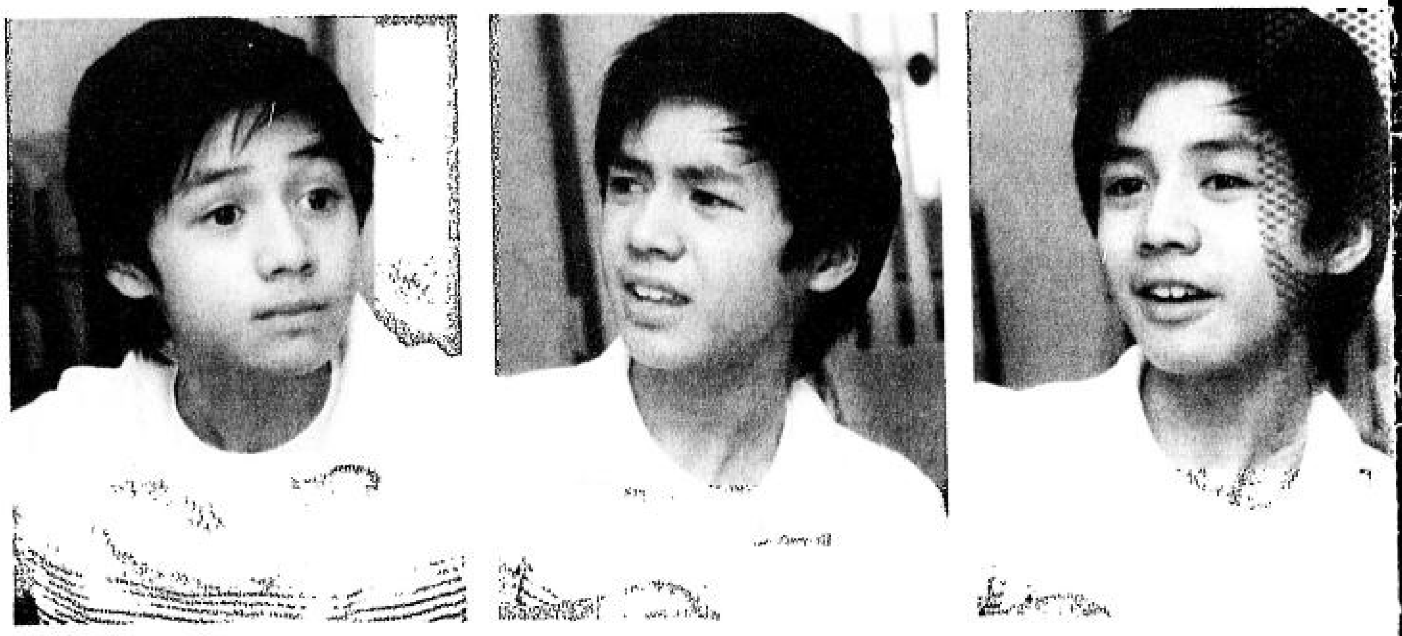

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From page A2-1

is in Playshop Kids.

Red studied musical theater in Singapore. He's teaching in Trumpets now.

Any plans for a solo album?

Soon. There will be a lot of dance music and ballads.

To what kind of music does a 13-year-old dance?

I dance to hip-hop.

Do you have crushes?

I have a lot. Betina Carlos is one. We did the Nickelodeon show together. She has a very, very pretty face.

What do you look for in a girl?

I like a girl who's tall and pretty. She also has to know how to sing.

What do you do in your spare time?

Kasi madalas napupuyat sa taping, I always sleep *para tumangkad.*

Do you have hobbies?

I play the piano and the guitar. I used to play basketball in school.

What do you plan to take up in college?

I'm thinking… it should be either something close to music or something totally different *para po may alam akong ibang gawin.*

If you were given half or your P1-million winnings right now, what would you buy?

The latest phone model, maybe an i-Pod, or a laptop.

Justin (Timberlake) or Usher?

Justin *na lang.*

Martin (Nievera) or Gary (Valenciano)?

Gary.

Nora (Aunor) or Vilma (Santos)?

Hindi ko po alam.

ERWIN, Raffy and Mon Tulfo

One show, 3 brothers

CONTROVERSIAL JOURNAList Ramon Tulfo has teamed up with his equally hard-hitting brothers Raffy and Erwin to host the public service program "Isumbong Mo!"

The show premieres tomorrow at 6 p.m. on RPN 9.

"Three Tulfos are more forceful than one," said Ramon. "This will be very different from shows in other networks with similar themes."

Mon, Raffy and Erwin used to host three individual shows.

Raffy added: "Other anchors do not take part in the actual operations. They would arrive on the set, record their spiels, and then leave."

The new hour-long show will tackle social concerns and all forms of power abuse.

team of pros guiding him along.

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12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

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Halle wants to be a mom

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

NEW YORK—ALL IS RIGHT IN THE world. The trees are green and magnificent in spring and my editor's fave, Ralph Fiennes, is garnering raves on Broadway in the play "Faith Healer." In fact, Ralph just earned a Tony Award nomination for this performance.

And to hear that the world is blessed with a baby girl from Tony Award winner Lea Salonga and Rob Chien—that is just wonderful. Congratulations, Lea and Rob! The new mom e-mailed us back right away. Nicole Beverly Chien made her entrance last Tuesday weighing 6 lb and 10 oz and measuring 19 inches.

Dante Basco Manila-bound

We learned from New Line Cinema (US) that Dante Basco is due in Manila to promote his movie with Antonio Banderas, "Take the Lead."

Dante, whom we profiled in this column last April, will arrive in the Philippines for a week's stay. The multi-talented Filipino-American—he is an actor, hip-hop/rap artist, poet, dancer and voice talent for Nickelodeon and Disney TV toons—is very excited about this trip.

We repeat what Antonio told us about Dante when we interviewed the Spanish actor: "Dante is a very good actor ... a very positive person to work with. He was very helpful, not only in front of the camera but also in the rehearsals. Because he is a little bit more mature than the rest of the kids, he brought the team together. Looking at Dante and at all of those kids was like seeing myself years ago."

Born in the Philippines

Philippine-born Mei Melancon has a small role as Psylocke in "X-Men: The Last Stand," which we saw here last Saturday evening. We asked director Brett Ratner about her during a press con.

Brett, who told us, "I want to be famous in the Philippines," said: "I first cast Mei in 'Rush Hour.' I met her during the audition and we became friends. Mei is a beautiful girl and a talented actress. I tend to cast a lot of actors of different ethnicities. In this movie, aside from Mei and Halle Berry, I also got Lance Gibson, who is Chinese, to play Spike; Dania Ramirez, who plays Callisto, is from the Dominican Republic; and so on. 'X-Men' is a multicultural comic book so I thought the movie should represent that more closely."

We interviewed the main cast, led by Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Famke Janssen, Anna Paquin and Ben Foster. In this third and last installment of the "X-Men" movie series about mutant heroes, a cure for mutancy causes an all-out war between those who support and oppose it.

Going back to the subject of babies, last Sunday being Mother's Day, motherhood—or the prospect of it—was the common thread of questions thrown at Oscar-winning actress Halle, who turns 40 this year. The actress, back as the white-haired Storm (who has the ability to control the weather), wants to have a baby. From the way she passionately talked about her desire to be a mom ... can the gods please bless this woman with a child?

HUGH JACKMAN, left, and Halle Berry, stars of "X-Men: The Last Stand," on a promo tour in New Mexico. They admit that having money allows them a lot of freedom. REUTERS

In the production notes, you mentioned how as a child, you felt that if you could change yourself, your life would be better. What aspect in your life at the time did you want to change?

I was raised by a white mother. I am of biracial lineage, as you know. The image to look up to was my mother who was white, blue-eyed and blonde. I wondered why I didn't look like her. Maybe my life would be easier. So I wanted to change myself. As I grew, I learned that [having mixed race heritage] is the best thing about me.

You will turn 40 in August. Does that mean anything to you?

Honestly, it means something only because everybody is asking. I've never been one who celebrated my birthday. I didn't grow up ... defining myself by a number.

Sixteen was important because then I could get my driver's license. Twenty-one was important because I could have a glass of wine. I'm happy to be here, happy to be alive. I celebrate my feelings on a daily basis so I don't need my birthday just to feel that.

The last time we saw you, you talked about how important it is for you to have a child. Are you close to fulfilling this wish?

I realized when I turned 30 that I needed more than a career. I needed a better reason to wake up in the morning than to go to a movie set or to produce a movie. I'm a person who believes that by putting that thought (having a baby) out there, it will make itself manifest one way or another. How, I have no idea but I feel it coming closer.

Are you in the process of getting pregnant?

I sit here pregnant-free (laughter).

In the process of adopting?

Right now, there's nothing to report on that front.

We read a lot about actors adopting children of different ethnicities. As a mixed-race child, how do you view that?

Being raised by a white mother was one of the best things that could have happened to me. I don't see color; I see people for who they are. I think it's a wonderful thing.

When we spoke to Hugh earlier, one of the interesting questions was about how success and monetary gain buy him a certain amount of freedom. In your case, how has money liberated you?

It's wonderful to not worry about how you'll take care of yourself. Money has given me a lot of peace of mind and security. Money has enabled me to move my mother to California (next month, from Cleveland). Money has given me the means to help people whom I love and I care about. I don't have 10 cars and lots of diamonds. I save a lot because I'm always worried when this trip is going to stop.

How is your relationship with your mother?

We're extremely close to my mother. I left home when I was 17 and I've always lived away from her. I am so happy that, now that I am almost 40, she's moving to Los Angeles, about five blocks away from my house. Finally we can have coffee in the morning or a glass of wine together at night. I can just run over there and grab her to watch a movie or take her along on these great trips.

It's really nice that, in this phase of our lives, we can reconnect in a physical way. We can do little things together instead of when I normally see her, we have a week or two weeks and we cram so much into two weeks.

Do you care to talk about how you met your present boyfriend (Gabriel Aubry, a Canadian model) at a fashion photo shoot?

I don't really want to talk about him. That is so new and fresh.

Okay then, how do you feel about Canadian men?

Canadian men are wonderful (laughter). Men are wonderful. I like men (laughter).

You are going from here to Cannes, where this film is going to be shown. Who are you bringing?

I'm taking nobody. I've always wanted to go to Cannes. This is the first chance I have. I am going to enjoy it. I hear it's amazing, crazy, exciting and a mess all at the same time. So I'm excited.

(E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.)

An X-pedient smorgasbord

'The Last Stand' is 'Fantastic Four' done right

By Ruel S. De Vera

REVIEW

SO MUCH COULD HAVE GONE wrong. Like the comic-book mutants it revolves around, "X-Men: The Last Stand" was pursued by adversity and regarded with suspicion. Could it go toe-to-toe with the artfully crowd-pleasing "X2: X-Men United?" Now that director Bryan Singer had gone up, up and away to the forthcoming "Superman Returns," had the team lost its X-factor?

"You have no idea what is upon us now," says Dr. Charles Xavier (cerebral Patrick Stewart). Exactly. The pressure was on director Brett Ratner ("Rush Hour") to tie up the loose plot threads from "X2" and deliver 20th Century Fox from the wrath of anxious X-fans. That he did, by wisely leaving the material mostly alone.

While "X2" was a stylish, moody movie, "Last Stand" is a straightforward superhero smorgasbord, efficient and beefy if overly busy. It's fascinating how Simon Kinberg ("Mr. & Mrs. Smith") and Zak Penn ("Fantastic Four") have engineered an enhanced plot possessing the recombinant DNA of X-Men tales by Stan Lee, Chris Claremont, Grant Morrison and even Joss Whedon. The Danger Room, the Fastball Special and Dark Phoenix appear in the movie, as do a handful of fan favorite mutants, albeit in brief and different circumstances.

Fiery McKellen

"When the air is still and the night has fallen, there's only one question you must answer: Whom will you stand with," asks Magneto (fiery Ian McKellen). "Last Stand" follows the events of "X2." Students of the Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters go about their lives and Jean Grey (Famke Janssen) is still feared dead. Meanwhile, Magneto raises a mutant army when a cure for mutation is announced. Storm (Halle Berry) leads the X-Men in a bid to repel Magneto's rogue elements while Grey has mysteriously been resurrected, heralding an enigmatic new threat.

Hugh Jackman is front and center, doing that Wolverine voodoo that he does so well. In fact, Wolverine is in almost every scene, clearly paving the way for the "Wolverine" spin-off in 2007. Berry gets a meatier part as Storm takes on the mantle of X-leadership.

Yes, Frasier

Astonishing performances come from extremes.

Hamming it up delightfully, is Kelsey Grammer—yes, "Frasier"—as Prof. Henry "Beast" McCoy. The fittingly low-key, pale turn of young Ellen Page as Kitty Pryde is similarly striking. And any chance to catch Brit hooligan Vinnie Jones ("Snatch") chewing scenery—as Juggernaut to boot—is welcome.

In his most remarkable work yet, Ratner approaches "The Last Stand" with workmanlike earnestness. The script fires one gambit after another, and while viewers may not have time to absorb the ramifications of one turn before another comes cannonballing in, there is a multiplicity of clever reinvention here. Aside from the mutant-spotting, fans should not leave their seats until after the credits have finished. Consider yourselves warned.

The heavily expository dialogue aside, "Last Stand" is "Fantastic Four" done right, taking the super-powers seriously and making the Marvel Comics panels come to life. This is where the avalanche of seamless special effects really works, making the battles possible and indulging in requisite homage to the source material. More ambitious, though not as sophisticated as "X2," "X-Men: The Last Stand" is an unexpectedly muscular curtain call for the movie franchise that made superheroes super on screen again.

("X-Men: The Last Stand" open May 24 in Metro Manila theaters

JACKMAN as Wolverine and Kelsey Grammer as Beast: Astonishing performances from extremes.

And this is how not to act like a prince

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

JAY-R, DUBBED "R & B PRINCE," didn't behave like a prince at a popular QC nightspot recently. He had a brawl with a Korean customer and he was asked to leave. An eyewitness said the commotion started when Jay-R and the Korean's common friend (a sexy girl who's a regular there) approached him, then the Korean. Jay-R overheard the foreigner telling the girl, "Your friend eats toothpaste and he might make us turn into ice statues!" Or something to that effect—apparently referring to Jay-R's toothpaste ad. Maybe he was in a bad mood that night. But Jay-R really ought to stay icy cool as he projects himself to be in the commercial.

I earlier wrote that **Alessandra de Rossi** and **Jeremy Marquez** have split up. I was hoping it was a false alarm—they're one of my fave couples in show biz (they're not "show biz" at all). Then I got a text from Jeremy that said, "I wish I could say we're together. Alex is one of a kind. Maybe someday things will work out. Perhaps time is what we need." Cool off? As long as hearts remain warm, it shouldn't be long before love heats up again.

Could it be true that RPN-9 production people are pissed at comedienne **Eugene Domingo**? Heard they've had enough of her staff-bashing and poking fun at the studio's not too high-tech equipment on her show, "Makeover." She also has reportedly too many demands. Perhaps she needs an *attitude* makeover.

Guess list

- Guess who **Derek Ramsey** was flirting with during the Miss Earth beauty pageant (he was one of the hosts). Did he feel the earth move under his skin when he met one of the candidates up close? Clue: She's one of the winners!
- Guess who this sexy star is! She lamented that her celebrity boyfriend had left her for a gay lover. Split up due to a "split heart?" Clue: The ex-lovers both have foreign blood!
- Guess who this young singer is! A Pinoy producer based in the US swears he will never *ever* invite the chanteuse to perform in his concerts again because her mom is a major headache. Clue: two vowels are prominent in the singer's name

'Chef' Donita

Now celebrating its fifth season, GMA 7's "Mobile Kusina" (10 a.m. Fridays) has former MTV VJ **Donita Rose** as host.

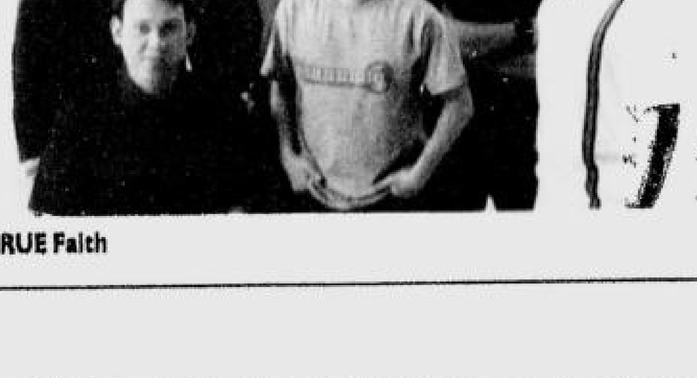
"I feel like I'm starting all over again," Donita reveals. "Hosting a cooking show is more challenging than being a VJ. I still have to improve my Tagalog."

She's done with counting down the top 10 hits. Now she'll help you count calories by whipping up healthy but yummy dishes.

True Faith is back

For 14 years now, my all-time favorite band True Faith has been making some of the best OPM. Whether churning out hits from the studio or playing live in concerts here or out of the country (they had a successful US tour late last year), they're a tough act to beat.

After a two-year absence from the recording scene, the band (led by **Medwin Marfil**, with **Kenneth Ilagan** and **Eugene Marfil** on guitars, **Bimbo Yance** on bass, **Jake Lumacad** on keyboards and **Benedict Esguerra** on drums) is now putting the finishing touches to their much awaited 11th CD under EMI, "Stray to be Found." Release date is in June. Check out the video for "Sa Piling Mo's" love theme, "Dahil Ikaw." Vote for it on MYX by texting, MYX VOTE DAHIL IKAW then send to 2366. For bookings call 0918-9203902. I never miss any of their shows. Check them out in Aruba Metrowalk every Wednesday and you'll see why True Faith is a true Pinoy music icon.



TRUE Faith

Undie show

It first left the crowd screaming for more with its red hot male underwear fashion show at Ratsky's Morato, headlined by hunk **Troy Montero**. Two years later, Dickies proves it's still a fashion trend-setter. It recently unveiled the comfy and cool female teens' Dickies Girl underwear line with a fashion show that featured **Jeni Hernandez, Richard Villanueva** and **Ara Mina**.

Fifth 'ETK' week

I'm overjoyed to be the guest co-host yet again on "ETK" tomorrow 4:30 p.m., ABS-CBN. I always have so much fun in the show with **Ogie Diaz, Toni Gonzaga** and the great staff, that I forget it's supposed to be work. Catch "Entertainment Konek," where we fearlessly collect and select the juiciest show biz "*kurek*" stories.

Absolutely no fear

Speaking of being fearless, it's a choice we make.

I didn't make that up. **Denise Lawrence**, a Canadian life coach visiting Manila next week, will discuss this in three free public programs titled "Face Off (Shaking Hands with Fear, Anger & Pain)" Yes, sir, these bad omens in your head are very closely related cousins!

Catch her on Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. at St. Cecilia Hall, St. Scholastica's College, Manila; on Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. at Ayala Center in Cebu, or on Thursday, 4:30 p.m., at UP Baguio. Call 890-7960 (Manila), 254-5975 (Cebu), or 445-593 (Baguio).

For feedback e-mail wateringhol shangrila@yahoo.com

No 'Da Vinci' in SM malls

THE R-18 RATING GIVEN BY THE movie and Television Review and Classification Board to "The Da Vinci Code" means the movie will not be shown in SM mall cinemas, which has a standing ban on films with adult themes.

Ric Camaligan, first vice president of SM Leisure Inc., which operates SM Cinemas, said the cinemaplex was standing by its own R-18 policy, even if "Da Vinci" is predicted to do well at the box office.

"If it's a hit, that's good for the distributor (Columbia Pictures)," Camaligan told INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Filmmaker Mel Chiongio, a member of the cinema committee of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, suggested a compromise. He said Singapore, one of the strictest in Asia in terms of censorship laws, has an "R-A" rating.

"Restricted Artistic," Chiongio explained. "That was one of the proposed amendments to PD 1986 (the law governing the MTRCB) during the consultative hearing in Congress last year."

Camaligan said that might not work for SM—producers and distributors might accuse the mall management of not being consistent. The mall banned R-18 films in 2004 because, he recalled, "they were not giving us sufficient revenue." *Bayani San Diego Jr.*

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THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 THE DA VINCI CODE	3 POSEIDON	4 THE DA VINCI CODE
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE	3 THX THE DA VINCI CODE 12:30, 3:40, 6:50, 10:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 POSEIDON	5 OVER THE HEDGE	6 THE DA VINCI CODE	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 POSEIDON	2 THE DA VINCI CODE		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE DA VINCI CODE 1:10, 4:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE DA VINCI CODE 1:40, 4:50, 11:10 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 POSEIDON 1:40, 3:45, 6:50, 7:55, 10:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 OVER THE HEDGE 1:50, 3:45, 7:45, 9:30, 11:25 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE DA VINCI CODE 2:10, 5:20, 8:40, 11:40 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE		
	3 THE DA VINCI CODE	4 OVER THE HEDGE	5 POSEIDON	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE	3 OVER THE HEDGE	4 POSEIDON
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 POSEIDON		
	3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	4 THE DA VINCI CODE	5 OVER THE HEDGE	

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Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

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Asia's Nightingale LANI MISALUCHA in a Special Concert May 21, 2006	American Idol Superstar Trivia Challenge May 20, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	**MARKET! MARKET!**
JAMMIN' with DISNEY May 18 to 21, 2006	Submerged: Fashion Show by Modelo Pilipinas May 19, 2006

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GLORIETTA 4
Cinema 1** - 1:30 PM, 4:40, 11:00
Cinema 2 - 11:30 AM, 2:40 PM, 5:50, 9:00
Cinema 3* - 12:30 PM, 3:40, 6:50, 10:00
Cinema 6 - 12:00 NN, 3:10, 6:20, 9:30
Cinema 6 - 1:00 PM, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30
GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 11:30 AM, 2:40 PM, 5:50, 9:00
Cinema 2 - 12:10 PM, 3:20 PM, 6:30, 9:40
GREENBELT 1
Cinema 2 - 12:00 NN, 3:10 PM, 6:20, 9:30
Onstage - 2:10 PM, 5:20, 8:30

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1* - 1:10 PM, 4:20
Cinema 2* - 1:40 PM, 4:50, 11:10
Cinema 5** - 2:10 PM, 5:20, 8:40, 12:00
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1 (THX) - 12:30 PM, 3:40 PM, 6:50, 10:00
Cinema 2 - 1:00 PM, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30
Cinema 3 - 1:30 PM, 4:40, 7:50, 11:00
MARKET! MARKET!
Cinema 1 - 11:45 AM, 2:55, 6:05, 7:20, 9:15
Cinema 5 - 12:15 PM, 3:25, 6:35, 9:45
AYALA CENTER CEBU
Cinema 1 - 12:30 PM, 3:10, 9:30
Cinema 2 - 12:00 NN, 2:40, 5:40, 9:00

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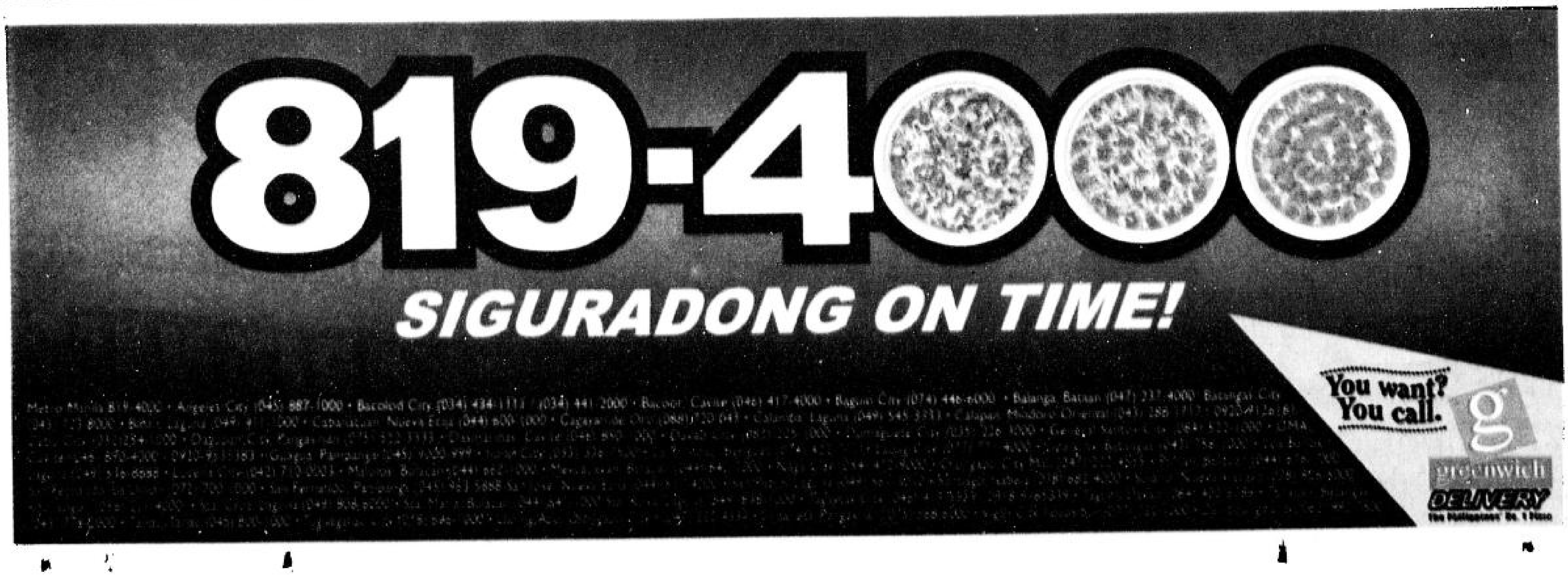
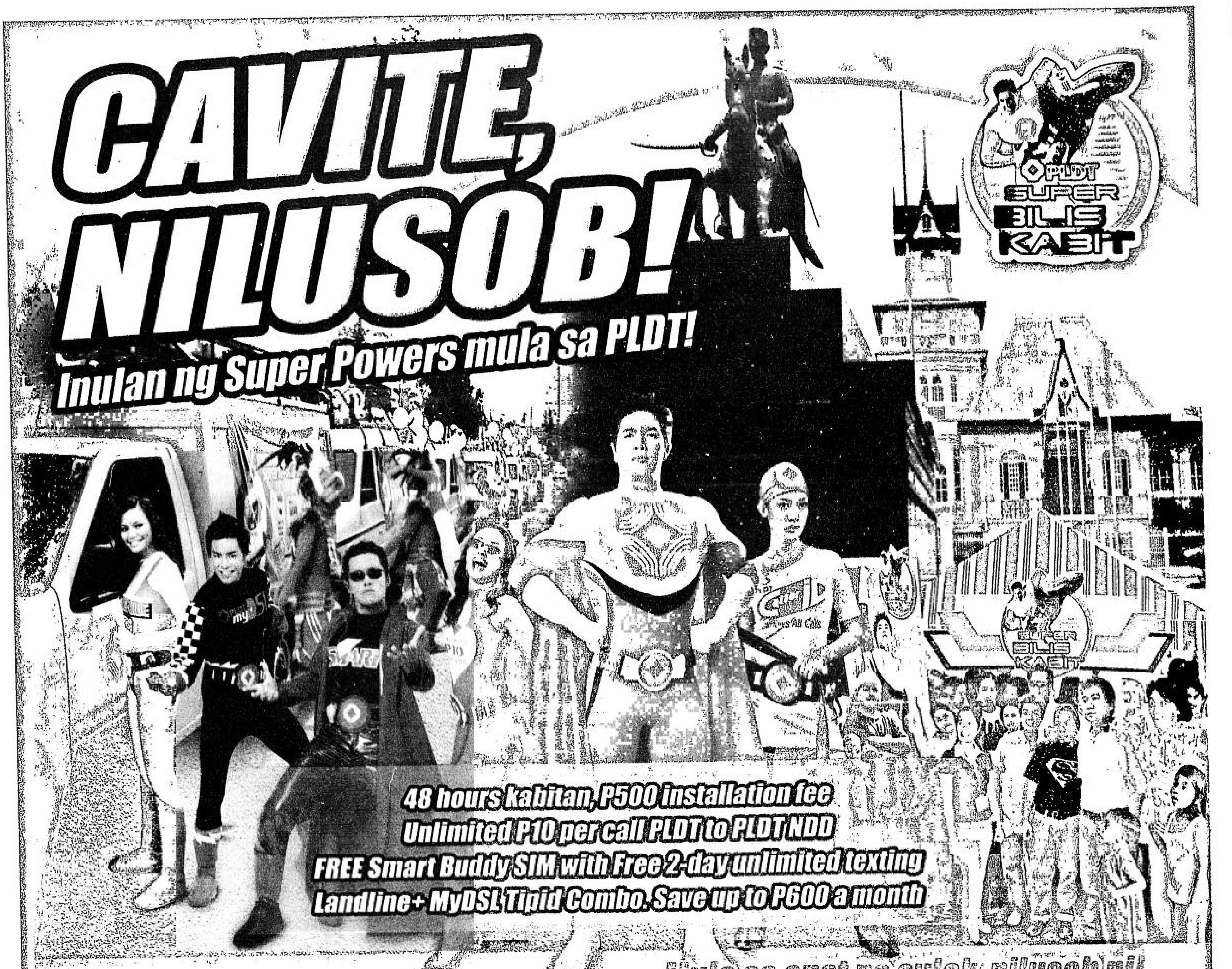
Customer Service Hotline: 752 7272

glorietta ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU



CAVITE, NILUSOB!

Inulan ng Super Powers mula sa PLDT!



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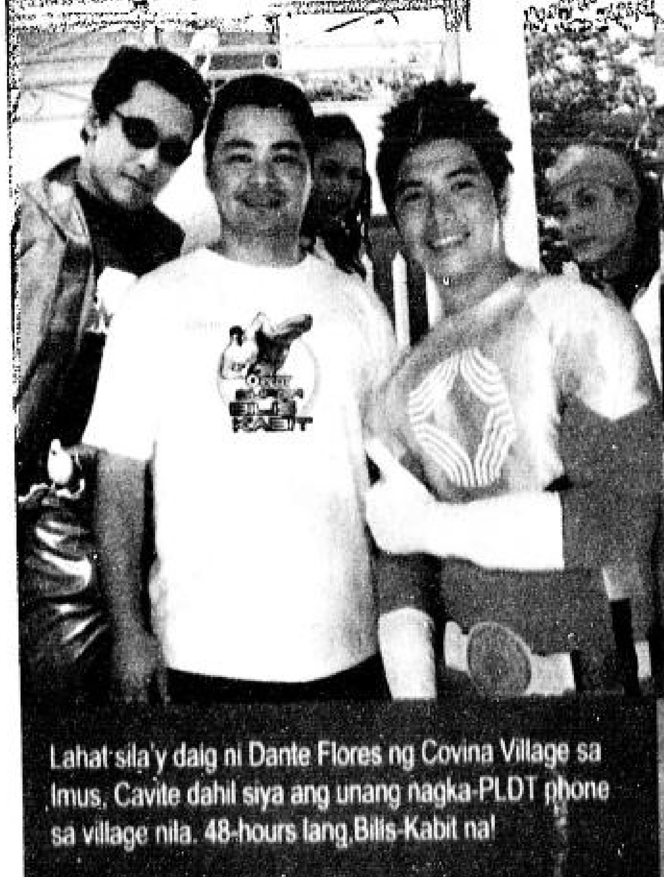
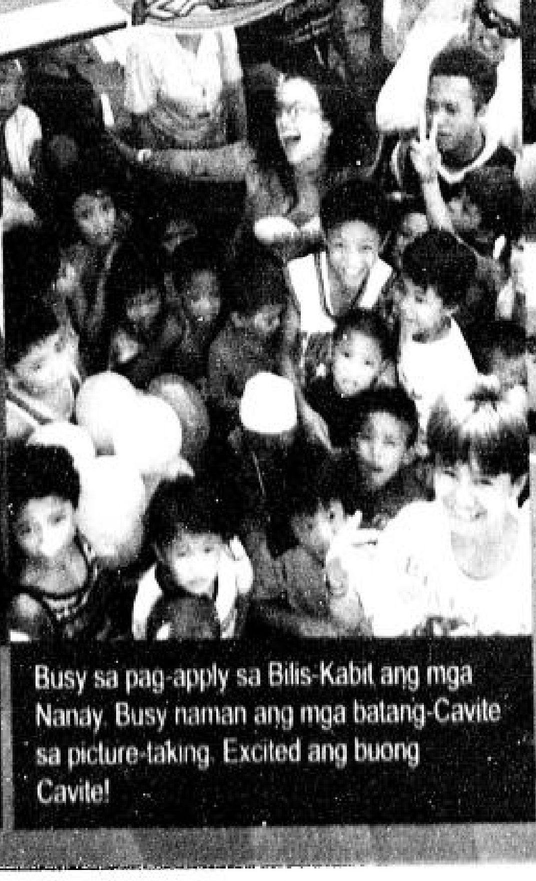
Ang dami-daming nagpa-PLDT Bilis-Kabit!



Lahat sila'y daig ni Dante Flores ng Covina Village sa Imus, Cavite dahil siya ang unang nagka-PLDT phone sa village nila. 48-hours lang Bilis-Kabit na!



Busy sa pag-apply sa Bilis-Kabit ang mga Nanay. Busy naman ang mga batang-Cavite sa picture-taking. Excited ang buong Cavite!

Malapit na ring dumalaw ang PLDT Super Bilis-Kabit sa inyo! Abangan...

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FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2006

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Stocks post biggest single-day loss in 5 years

Heavy losses on Wall Street spark selling spree

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 3.44-PERCENT LOWER YESTERDAY, falling sharply in line with the region after the latest US inflation scare sparked heavy losses on Wall Street overnight, dealers said.

They said the markets have been very volatile over the past several days as opinion on the outlook for US interest rates has veered dramatically with every bit of fresh data.

At the same time, stocks have made sustained gains in recent months, taking the bourse to near seven-year highs to give investors plenty of room for profit-taking.

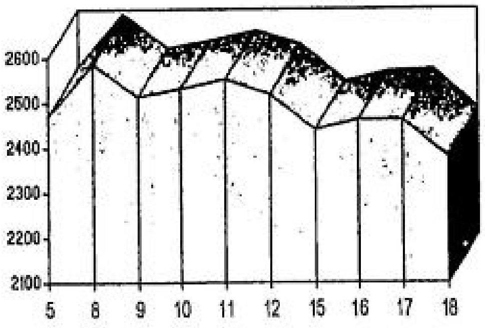
The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shed 84.83 points at 2,378.74 after trading between 2,368.85 and 2,463.57 points. This was its biggest single-day loss since Jan. 17, 2001, when it shed 93.16 points.

Volume was 3.74 billion shares worth P2.39 billion.

Declines led gains 106 to 9, with 30 stocks unchanged.

"It's a knee-jerk reaction to Wall Street's disappointing performance," said James Lago of Westlink Global Eq-

STOCKS/ B3



Peso weakens to 52.595 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY WEAKENED TO A new four-month low of 52.595 against the dollar, spooked by prospects of further interest rate increases by the US Federal Reserve, currency dealers said.

The local currency shed 53.50 centavos from Wednesday's closing of 52.06 at the Philippine Dealing System. It slid throughout the day after opening at an intra-day high of 52.25:$1 as foreign exchange inflows failed to cope with intensified corporate demand.

Roland Avante, treasurer at Chinatrust Commercial Bank, said: "There was really pent-up demand for the US dollars and there's not enough supply."

"The CPI (consumer price index) report which came out in the US was quite scary. It might signal further upward movement in short-term interest rates by the US Fed," Avante said.

It was earlier expected that the monetary tightening in the world's largest economy was at its tailend.

Avante added that many currency traders were short on dollars since the last two months of 2005 when the peso was sharply gaining and were thus prompted to cover these positions now by buying dollars.

Demand from oil companies was likewise boosting corporate demand for dollars, he said.

Over the last few days, the peso had been battered by strong demand for dollars ahead of the import season in the third quarter. At the same time, inflows from overseas Filipino workers had poured in much earlier than the usual April-May influx, traders said.

Strong OFW remittances, improved confidence in the government's fiscal reforms and dissipating political noise jacked the peso up from the 54 levels last year, ending 2005 at 53.09 against the dollar.

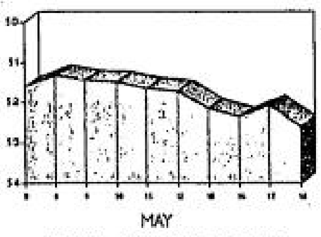
Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist at Banco de Oro Universal Bank, said the peso was being supported by strong portfolio flows into the capital markets and expectations of a possible sovereign credit upgrade as early as the fourth quarter or early 2007.

He projected that the peso would trade between a high of 50.50 and a low of 54 against the US dollar, averaging at 53.50 and settling at 53:$1 by year's end.

Ravelas said he expected the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to tighten its overnight rates further this year, after raising key overnight policy rates by a total of 75 basis points and hiking the reserve requirement by 2 percentage points last year.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 52.595 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 18, 2006

Y 110.82 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 18, 2006

GOLD: $ 682.70-683.20
per ounce Hong Kong, May 18, 2006

WHAT'S INSIDE

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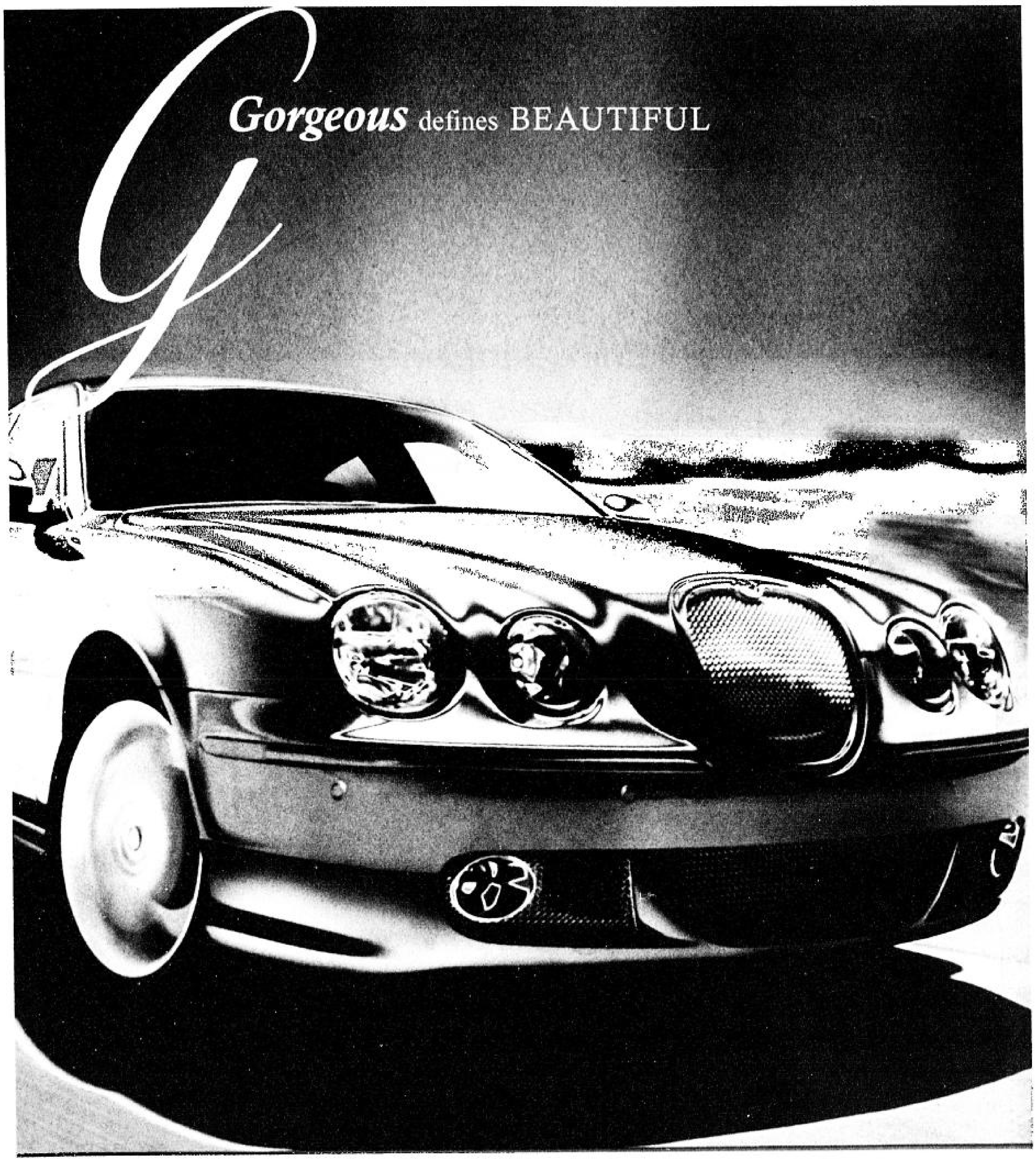
NDC to float 7-year peso bonds to raise P10B /B2

PSE reports 61.3% rise in net foreign buying /B7



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NDC to float 7-year peso bonds to raise ₱10B

Gov't planning to use funds for infrastructure projects

By Doris C. Dumlao

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORP. WILL issue P10 billion in long-term peso bonds this month or next month to boost the government's infrastructure spending, Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said yesterday.

Neri told reporters that proceeds from the bond float, the first tranche of a P20-billion planned issuance for this year, would be used to augment funds for irrigation. He said the bonds would carry a maturity of at least seven years.

He said the government was hoping to increase its infrastructure spending by 55 percent this year.

Neri said proceeds of the float would help the government in its pump-priming efforts.

He noted that the delay in the enactment of the 2006 budget, for instance, could infringe on the country's economic growth performance.

"It could have an impact because the government will not be spending as much as we'd like to," Neri said.

However, he said the Senate had committed to pass the budget bill this week and elevate the appropriations act to the bicameral conference committee next week.

The government plans to spend an additional P35 billion to boost the economy this year. The funds will come from P20 billion worth of savings in the 2005 budget, local government funds and the NDC bond float, Malacañang earlier said.

Among the projects to be funded are roads and irrigation works that would make available two million hectares of land for agriculture.

In a recent study, the World Bank warned that infrastructure development in the Philippines was lagging behind population growth and rapid urbanization, creating bottlenecks that could harm the country's competitiveness and poverty reduction efforts.

WB country director Joachim von Amsberg cited findings from the bank's new report "Philippines: Meeting Infrastructure Challenges" and urged the government to take advantage of its fiscal progress to beef up infrastructure spending.

The study indicated that critical reforms spearheaded by the government to promote private sector participation and power sector restructuring were among the most progressive in Asia. However, progress in infrastructure has not kept up with population explosion and urbanization, drawing concern that growth and poverty reduction targets, including the Millennium Development Goals, may be at risk.

Over the next few years, Von Amsberg said the Philippines would need to gradually shore up infrastructure investments from less than 3 percent to at least 5 percent of gross domestic product, the average spending level needed for East Asia middle-income countries.

He said improved efficiency of infrastructure spending in the Philippines would ease infrastructure bottlenecks.

Von Amsberg said: "The Philippines' ongoing fiscal turnaround and strong revenue collection in recent months can set in motion a virtuous circle of improved public finances, better public services and growth, more employment and jobs, and more rapid social progress and poverty reduction."

Proposed Lafayette test run backed

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LAFAYETTE (PHILIPPINES) INC., WHOSE mining operations in Albay was shutdown last year after tailings spilled and contaminated water resources in the area, should be given another chance to prove that it had done well in addressing the problem, according to the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

CMP president Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez yesterday urged the government to allow Lafayette's Rapu-Rapu project to restart operations but under probation.

"This is only until such time that Lafayette has shown that it had complied with all the requirements and recommendations that the government may (demand), whatever these may be," Romualdez said.

In a prepared statement, CMP announced that an independent team of mining experts commissioned in November to look into the mine spills found that Lafayette "has substantially complied with the recommended requirements and standards in preparation for the necessary test-run."

The test-run would be done as soon as the Pollution Adjudication Board issues a temporary lifting of the cease and decease order on the Rapu-Rapu project.

CMP said the probe team's findings highlighted the importance of monitoring closely the firm's operations to ensure that capacity usage would increase progressively.

Bancommerce to help set up bank in Africa

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF Equatorial Guinea announced that it had entered into a partnership with the Philippines' Bank of Commerce (Bancommerce) to set up the national bank in that oil-producing nation in Central Africa.

The African bank, to be named Banco Nacional de Guinea Equatorial (Bange) has the Equatorial Guinean government as its main stockholder with a 45-percent interest. Bancommerce took up 30 percent of the capital.

In a statement, Bancommerce said it saw opportunities and potential in Bange, especially in the area of servicing overseas Filipino workers in that region. There are foreign-owned oil refineries operating in that country employing Filipino workers.

Equatorial Guinea Minister of Finance and Budget Marcelino Owono Edu, in an official statement, said the bank would have an initial capital of 3 million euros. Private corporations and individual investors in Guinea have taken up 25 percent of the equity.

During a meeting of the Parliament of equatorial Guinea, Edu said Bancommerce, aside from being an equity partner in the bank, was also engaged as a technical adviser of the bank.

Last year, 11 citizens from Equatorial Guinea underwent a comprehensive training program in different areas of banking at the Bancommerce head office in Makati.

Bancommerce's participation in this venture was authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Release of ₱540M to employees of Napocor OKd

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR OF NEGOTIATIONS, the Office of the Solicitor General has finally allowed the management of National Power Corp. to release some P540 million in employee step increments that had been placed in escrow.

The release of the funds, however, is subject to three conditions, Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura told Napocor president Cyril del Callar in a letter.

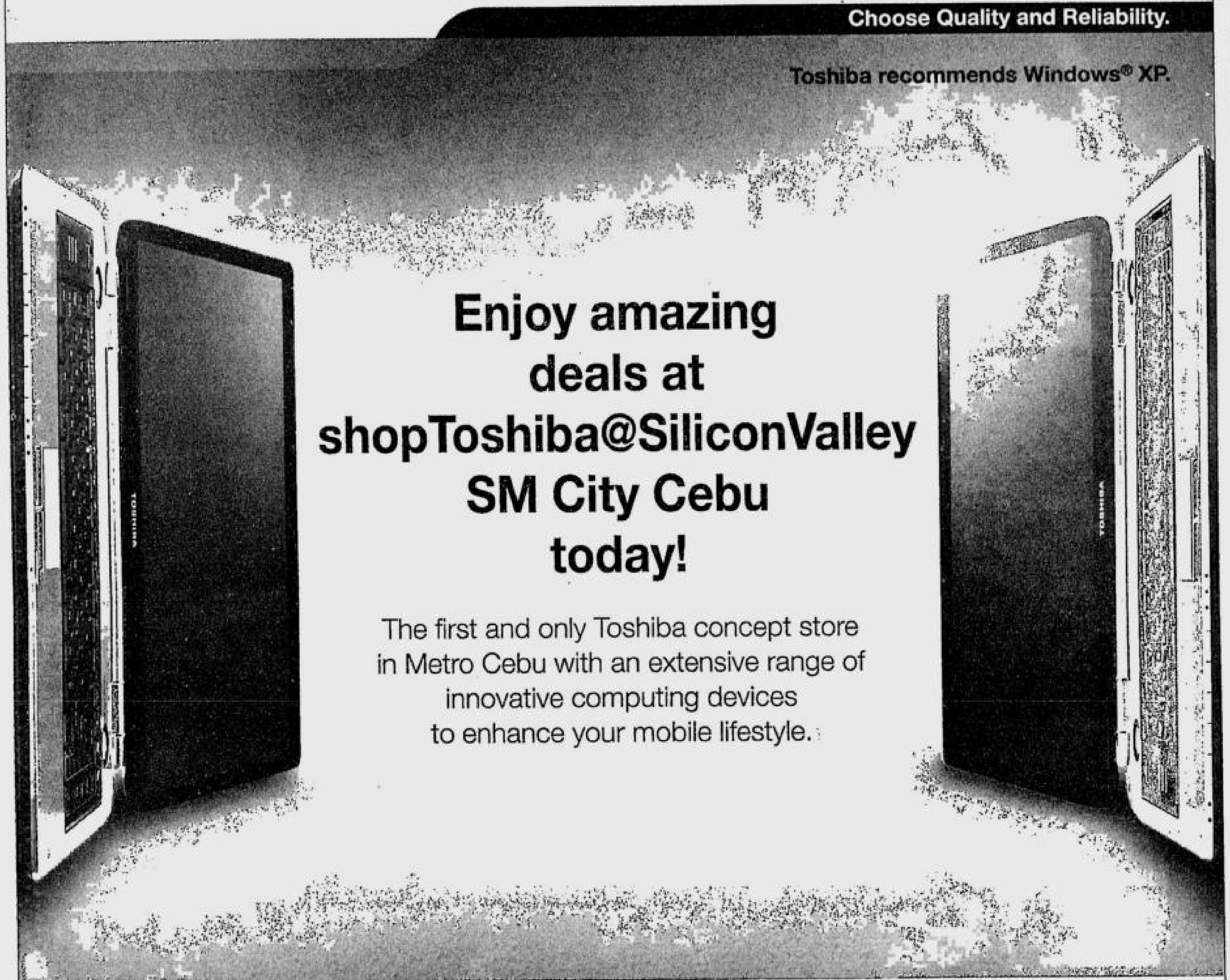
The first condition is that the amount to be released should be the full and final settlement of the step increment claims of the Napocor Employees Consolidated Union (Necu) and all other concerned employees.

Another condition is that the release of the P540 million "should constitute a waiver of all allied claims by the Necu and all concerned employees for the payment of step increments."

The last is that the amount should be paid directly to concerned Napocor employees.

Step increments are basic salary adjustments given to employees every so many years of satisfactory service in the public sector.

The funds placed in escrow involved the amount of salary adjustments claimed by Napocor employees when the state firm was reorganized in 2003.



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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE MEDIA BATTLE MAY HAVE quieted down, but a low-intensity conflict is still being waged at Equitable PCIBank preparatory for next week's stockholders' meeting.

A proxy campaign is underway between the camps of vice chairs Teresita Sy and Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, with both groups seeking to add more board seats for each of them in Tuesday's election.

In addition to the SM Group's present five-member representation in the board, Sy has nominated her brother Harley, former Trade Undersecretary Gregory Domingo, SM Investments chief finance officer Jose Sio, and Highlands Prime president Antonio Henson to join her in the 15-member bank board.

Romualdez, despite his 8-percent shareholdings not being enough to obtain a second board seat, nevertheless nominated his brother, Benguet Corp. president Benjamin Philip, and two Romualdez lawyers for the Tuesday meeting.

According to the grapevine, the SM Group is also supporting the nomination of retired Bangko Sentral Governor Alberto Reyes for independent director, and to dislodge incumbent Anthony Te, who is said to be a Romualdez ally.

Despite their boardroom differences, Sy and Romualdez seem to project an amiability toward each other in public, especially when among the bank staff. According to the grapevine, the SM heiress and Romualdez even took together a recent Asian Spirit flight to Baguio City to attend the bank's planning conference.

Unable to land because of low-lying clouds, the flight had to turn back to Manila, where the two hired a Lucio Tan helicopter and promptly flew back to the City of Pines, this time as seatmates.

Burlesk apology

HOUSE Majority Leader Prospero Nograles is walking tall these days, after the tabloid Abante and its sister Abante Tonite offered an unequivocal apology to the Davao City congressman over the tabloids' "Burlesk King" stories.

The tabloids went to town to claim that a naked Nograles had been caught on video with an ABS-CBN host in a five-star hotel in Manila by no less than the policeman-husband of the TV personality.

The two Tagalog tabloids, owned by Malaya publisher Jake Macasaet, later on admitted that no such video footage exists.

Apologizing to the respective families, the tabloids on Wednesday added that the Davao City congressman and the broadcaster were not lovers after all, as had been broadly insinuated by the series.

As a result of the embarrassing stories, the broadcaster had to leave ABS-CBN under a cloud of doubt.

Money-go-round

- RENATO Corona will turn just 58 this October, but already the Supreme Court justice had to be transported out of the Guam airport terminal in a wheel chair during a visit to the island earlier this week.
- A TOP San Miguel Corp. official has commissioned one of his crisis PR agents to plant negative column items against SGV, blaming the audit firm and its foreign partner, Ernst and Young, for allegedly having botched San Miguel's hybrid bond issue.

Heard through the grapevine

ONE society magazine editor instantly and correctly guessed that Inno Sotto was the couturier referred to in Monday's item as owing his landlord two years of back rent for his apartment-atelier in Malate. Apparently, Sotto's financial predicament is quite known among the industry players.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Stocks post biggest single-day loss in 5 years

From page B1

uities Inc.

Wall Street shares took a dive Wednesday after a hotter-than-expected report on US inflation ignited investor jitters about higher interest rates.

American stocks wiped out $64 billion in market value from the 30 companies that make up the Dow industrial average index, giving the blue-chip average its biggest one-day point drop in three years.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average tumbled 160.25 points (1.4 percent) to 11,259.64 while the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite slumped 29.59 points (1.33 percent) to 2,199.54.

The broad-market Standard and Poor's 500 index retreated 16.98 points (1.31 percent) to 1,275.10.

Ahead of the market opening, the Labor Department reported that consumer prices increased a larger-than-expected 0.6 percent in April, led by higher energy prices. The core consumer price index (CPI), which excludes food and energy, increased 0.3 percent, also slightly higher than expected.

"The CPI numbers seemed to have really shaken up people," said John Forelli, senior vice president and portfolio manager at Independence Investments. "The fear is that inflation may have reignited and that the Fed is going to have to keep raising rates longer than they expected."

Significantly, the data showed core inflation is now at the top end of the Fed's comfort zone of a 2-percent annual pace. The central bank has raised short-term interest rates 16 times in a row over the past two years in a bid to choke off inflationary pressures in the economy. *AFP*

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Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week May 16, 2006	Last Week May 9, 2006
Bond Fund - Peso	1.45650	1.45925
Managed Fund - Peso	1.62094	1.63009
Growth Fund - Peso	1.32557	1.34581
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.2465	1.2552

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

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Investment Funds of Wealth Builder & Wealth Secure

	UNIT PRICES (In Php)	
	May 15, 2006	May 8, 2006
Fixed Income Fund	1.178075	1.172364
Balanced Fund	1.200090	1.196966
Equity Fund	1.253925	1.256775

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

The weekly unit prices are also available at www.insularlife.com.ph.

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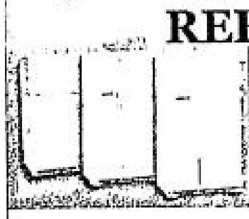

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More recently, the LaserComb was the focus of a year long study sponsored by Dateline NBC. The Dateline story tracked the success and failures of five men using five different popular hair loss products. Their progress was monitored by Dr. Paolo Romanelli, a professor with the University of Miami's Dermatology Department. Dr. Romanelli had this to say about the participant (his name is George) who used the LaserComb: "I think he had some substantial results. I think the results were very encouraging and overall this participant had good results." He added, "I definitely saw some new hair on the top of his head." For his part, George was "thrilled" with his results, and he even mentioned that he had a friend who also used the LaserComb with very impressive results. In addition to all this, the LaserComb has been the focus of positive news coverage from ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC stations around the United States. The LaserComb has also been the subject of many news articles including coverage in newspapers like the Wall Street Journal. Even "Ripley's Believe It or Not" rated the LaserComb as a "Believe It" product.

TIME
INVENTIONS 2000
INVENTIONS
HAIR THICKENER

George at beginning of HairMax Laser Therapy Treatment
George after 6 months of HairMax Laser Therapy Treatment
George after 1 year of HairMax Laser Therapy Treatment

All HairMax LaserCombs are manufactured in the USA under a Quality Management System in accordance with the highest international standards. The manufacturing process is ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 13488:1996 certified. In the United States, the LaserComb is classified as a cosmetic device that promotes thicker, fuller, healthier hair. The LaserComb was granted a medical license from the Government of Canada in January 2003 for claims and indications to strengthen hair, prevent hair loss, and stimulate regrowth of scalp hair in men and women. A similar medical license from the Government of Singapore followed in December 2003.

Over 2,500 papers have been published on the positive scientific studies of Low-Level Laser Therapy. A report published in the International Journal of Cosmetic Surgery and Aesthetic Dermatology studied thirty-five patients (28 men and 7 women) with androgenetic alopecia, a common form of hair loss. Each patient used the LaserComb for six months. Hair count increased 93.5% on average, with both men and women showing significant improvement. Hair strength increased an average of 78.9% in all patients. We encourage you to learn more about Low-Level Laser Therapy in books and on the internet.

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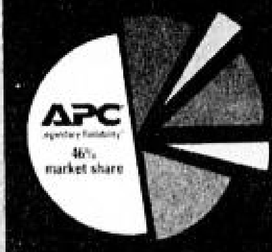

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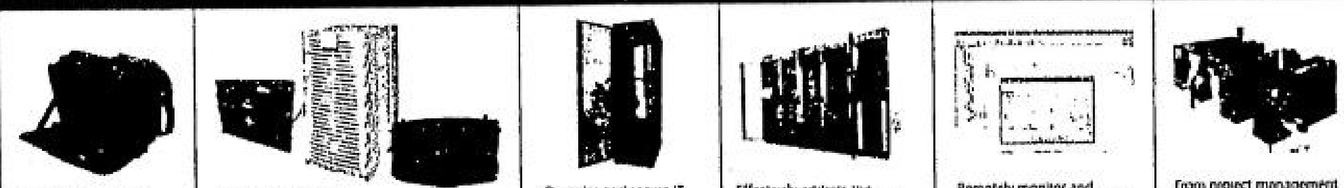

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BUSINESS Friday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Market research helps build brands

Benefits of knowing market well outweigh cost of conducting study

By Karen V. de Asis
Contributor

NOT MANY FIRMS APPRECIATE the value of applied market research in selling and building brands. Many believe that it is an expensive exercise, and merely tells them what they already know.

In many cases, the research outcome may not be satisfying, due largely to gaps in the preparation of the market research brief.

The quality of the research depends largely on how well the research briefing was conducted and how the discussions and agreements before the actual research progressed.

The old adage "garbage in, garbage out" largely applies in this case.

What makes a research brief?

At least seven critical elements must be present in any research brief.

These are the research background, research objectives, respondent profile or potential target market, methodology, sample size, timing and budget.

The details of the brief may vary depending on the discussion between the research agency and the client.

At the onset, the marketer must be clear on the use of a particular research methodology and the expected results.

Research background. Provides an overview of the company and/or brand and the scenario leading to the need to conduct research.

Research objectives. Define and list the reasons for conducting research. Likewise, define the learning parameters and what the marketer expects to know from the entire research process.

Respondent profile. Describes the potential target market and/or respondent group. This includes the demographic, socioeconomic and psychographic information, if available.

Research methodology. Describes the preferred methodology for mining insights. The initial research brief may define the preferred method; nonetheless, in a discussion between the marketer and agency, the methodology may be retained or changed.

Sample size. This refers to the number of people, called respondents, who will be part of the research process. The actual number depends on the type of research that will be mounted i.e. whether qualitative or quantitative.

Qualitative tests require less number of respondents while quantitative tests must have a minimum number of respondents statistically acceptable to represent the universe being studied.

Timetable. The timetable defines when the client expects to get the results of the study. The agency and the client agree to a timetable that works backwards from the first presentation date.

Budget The client provides the agency with his budget. This may change depending on the outcome of the discussion of the research method and process.

How does research build brands?

Applied consumer market research is one of the most effective ways of steering a brand to a certain direction.

There are different forms of consumer market research. Some of the more effective and commonly used methods include the focus group discussion (FGD); usage, attitude, image survey (UAI); product placement test; advertising pre-test, retail audit and the customer satisfaction survey.

Focus group discussion. The focus group discussion is a qualitative study that allows deep mining of insights from a representative potential target market. Each FGD can have anywhere from six to eight participants.

While not statistically acceptable and data needs to be further validated by quantitative research nevertheless, the results of the FGDs are often used to set the direction of the brand.

Depending on the respondent profile and details of the research study, FGDs may cost anywhere from P60,000 to P120,000 per group.

Usage, attitude, image survey. This type of quantitative survey makes use of a highly structured questionnaire that helps determine the level of consumption of a brand and its competition.

Likewise, the outcome of the research also determines the consumers' attitude, likability, perceptions and associations around the brand and its competition. The results of the research help determine the brand's most favorable and strong associations that can be otherwise visual or copy related and may be sustained in present and future communications materials.

The geographic scope of the UAI and sample has implications on the final cost of the study. It may range from a low of P350,000 to over a million pesos.

Product placement test. This type of research test can be done through an initial small sample and then developed into a full blown quantitative research. The objective is to gauge the target market's acceptance of a product or its derivative, determine how the product is actually used by consumers, appeal of the product as well as areas for improvement.

Depending on the sample, profile and objectives of the product placement test, costs can range from a low of P60,000 to P350,000.

Advertising pre-test. This type of quantitative research test is mounted before any commercial airing of a brand campaign. Due to the high cost of advertising, it is often wise for brands using television as a major medium to have their advertising campaign tested before nationwide airing.

Reputable market research agencies have their own proprietary versions of the advertising pre-test. Nonetheless, the objectives for testing remain the same for all. These include determining the ability of the ad to rise above the media clutter or the advertising material's level of intrusiveness; ability to communicate the brand's value proposition, product freight/window and brand personality; ability of the ad to effectively motivate the target market to buy the brand.

Most creative ads engage the viewer. Unfortunately, a good number stop at this stage and fail to move the buyer to buy the product.

The advertising pre-test is a very efficient tool in determining whether a brand's advertising is simply engaging or is truly highly effective in persuading the target market to buy the brand. Pretests can cost from a low of P180,000 to a high of P450,000 depending on the sample.

Retail audit. This is an efficient way of determining what products fly off the store shelves, and how fast. While gross sales are usually the norm of many firms in assessing the performance of the brand, consumer off-take nonetheless provides a more accurate description of the brand's performance in the market.

Depending on a company's incentives to the trade, sales loading can happen where retail outlets turn in volume purchase orders. Nonetheless, these orders can be sitting in the warehouse or in store shelves.

On the other hand, a retail audit provides an accurate picture of the market's acceptance of a brand as the data reveals consumer movement from the store shelves.

Information that can be derived from retail audits include which SKU variant or size is invariably being bought heavily; how many units are being moved out per store, per geographic area, etc. in a certain period; how is the category and its brands performing, etc.

Retail audit costs vary based on the recency of the data and the category. This can range from P350,000 to as much as P650,000.

Customer satisfaction survey. This survey provides an effective way to measure the level of satisfaction the consumer has when using the brand. Is the target market truly elated when using the brand, will he or she recommend the use of the brand, what did the consumer like or not like about the brand, etc.

Learning from this research tool can help the marketer institutionalize the consumer offer and process and improve on any downsides.

The costs of research can be substantial, indeed. But this is small compared to the cost of a disastrous strategy or wrong brand direction.

One must also recognize that it is the client's expert use of research that will ultimately help build his brand.

(The author is a professor of Marketing and Brand Management at the De La Salle Professional Schools Graduate School of Business and is chief brand strategist of Marketing Knowledge Series Training and Consultancy with email at kdeasis@skyinet.net or www.karendeasis.com.)

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

GOINGS-ON

DOT sets bigger business mission to Japan

THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM IS SENDING A BIGGER DELEGATION FOR its business mission to Japan this month, the second since last year.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano said the 2nd Philippine Business Mission (PBM) would be composed of 85 delegates representing a wider field of interests to enhance the mission's chances of attracting more Japanese tourists and investments.

"They will have pre-arranged meetings with executives and owners of reputable Japanese firms in Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka for investments, marketing tie-ups, joint ventures, and sales and supply contracts. A dedicated one-day tourism business exchange between Philippine suppliers and Japanese buyers will be held in Osaka on May 22, Nagoya on May 24 and Tokyo on May 26," Durano said.

With Philippine Airlines as a major sponsor, the 2nd PBM involves airlines and cruise ships, local governments (provincial, city and municipal), resorts and spas, travel agencies and tour operators, hotels and restaurants, health and wellness establishments, wholesale and retail shops, and beach and mountain destinations.

"Designed to firm up last year's agreements, the 2nd PBM will also open and initiate new ones, especially on investments in tourism facilities that will increase our current 10,000 room capacity, which is just enough to accommodate our target foreign arrivals of three million this year," Durano added.

The 2nd PBM, according to Durano, must also help ensure that this year's target of hitting 3 million foreign visitors will be attained. He said last year's PBM helped push the country's foreign arrivals for the full-year 2005 to 2.6 million, which even topped 2004's record of 2.29 million, with Japan as a major source of tourists.

This year's event is more significant as it marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations bet-ween the Philippines and Japan since the ratification of the Peace Treaty and Reparations Agreement on July 23, 1956.

Since then, Japan has evolved to become the Philippines' second largest investor, trading partner and source of tourists, and largest donor of official development assistance.

Durano said the 2nd PBM would also reinforce the now well-established Premium Resort Islands Philippines brand in Japan, support the new sub-campaign "Philippines: Wellness from the Inside Out," push Filipino exports, and promote the country's destinations to the 17-million Japanese outbound market.

Through the 2nd PBM, members of the local tourism industry will gain bilateral government assistance in finding Japanese buyers of travel packages, investors in new projects, and partners for joint ventures or asset acquisitions, and other business linkages.

Japan is projected to account for over a million, or more than 20 percent, of the country's five million target arrivals by 2010.

Learn candle- and soap-making

AROMATIC candles are ideal for souvenirs and gifts because of their soothing and relaxing effect. Learn how to make them and earn extra cash in the process.

In line with the government's objective to give livelihood to those who want to earn extra income, the Golden Treasure Skills Development Program will conduct a one-day seminar on Aroma Candle-Making at the Vermont Blooms Unlimited No. 9 Anonas Rd., Proj. 3, Quezon City on May 21, Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials, different costing methods and formula in candle-making. Students will be given hands-on experience on how to make decorative aroma candles, twisted candles, gel candles with pellets type paraffin wax, candle in glass container, etc.

On May 27, Saturday, the Golden Treasure Skills Development Program will conduct a one-day seminar on soap-making to be held at the UPAA Alumni Center, Magsaysay Avenue, Ylanan St., University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials and costing. Students will learn how to make liquid dishwashing soap, liquid hand soap, liquid all purpose soap, bar detergent soap, herbal bath soap (papaya, kalamansi, cucumber, oatmeal etc.) powder soap, fabric softener, car shampoo, bonus courses are liquid bleach, tile and bowl cleaner and how to process virgin coconut oil for soap. Participants will receive a certificate right after the seminar. All materials will be provided. For questions, call 952-40-28, 952-29-34, 951-29-66, 436-78-26 and 913-65-51.

'Will price-cut promos damage our brand equity?'

MARKETING Rx

Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

Q: We attended a seminar where one of the speakers told us that price-driven promotions can damage brand equity. If this is true, why are so many companies doing it?

Then, when we echoed the seminar at the office and mentioned this warning, our general manager disagreed.

He cited the case of the leading consumer companies, like P&G, Unilever and Colgate-Palmolive, that are still into price-based promos.

He asked: "Do you see the brand equity of Ariel, Safeguard, Sunsilk, or Palmolive Shampoo suffering?"

So, what's the real score on the effect of price-driven promos on brand equity?

A: If we source "the real score" from the available published studies on this issue, we will find different answers.

Some studies showed that a quick fix price-based promo adversely affected brand equity. But just as many studies showed no such adverse effect.

To answer your two questions, we'll source from both theory and practice.

Then, it's up to you to choose which logic seems more applicable in your particular case and situation.

Your first question: "Is it true that price driven promos damage brand equity?"

What are price driven, price-based promotions in the first place? And how does this differ from a product-based promo?

Promo advocates tell us that a "price-off" and a coupon are price-based consumer promos.

On the other hand, a bonus pack and a product sample are product-based consumer promos. You see examples of these promos in the supermarkets every day.

Many practitioners would of course argue that a bonus pack or a product sample effectively functions like a price-off or a coupon. They are "indirect" price-based promos. In trade promotion, a trade discount is a price-based trade promo while a free good (as in a "10-plus-1" deal, that is, a "10 cases bought, 1 case free" deal) is a product-based trade promo.

Again, many would argue that a "10-plus-1 free good deal" is effectively or "indirectly" a 10 percent discount and therefore a price-based promo.

So as you can see, here's one reason why there's a continuing, raging unsettled debate about sales promotion.

There isn't even an agreement among practitioners about basic terms like what's a price-based versus a product-based promo.

If you trace the origin of the debate, you'll find that it's the ad agency people who were critical of the promo and its effect on brand equity.

The claim is that advertising builds brand values.

However, because promos are quick ways to induce brand switching, repeat purchase, or getting consumers to buy now or buy more, they often do so at the expense of brand image.

But what do studies show? Here are some of these studies' more insightful and helpful results.

Your category determines the risk

First, you have to consider the product category where your brand belongs.

If your brand is a consumer durable (say, a household appliance or a car), there's not much risk of its brand equity getting hurt by, for example, a sale price promo.

At the end of almost every year, when the next year's model is announced, leading car brands go on a sale price promo.

And that's been going on for years. But we understand that Honda's and Toyota's brand equity remain intact.

Next, consider the price segment your brand is in.

If it's in a premium segment and you get tempted and yield to the temptation to promote based on price, then something could happen.

One could think: "How can this brand of mine go down close to the price of an economy brand without sacrificing quality? It must now be lower in quality on some of the attributes. That's not my premium brand anymore."

In such a case, the price promotion erodes the premium brand's equity and image.

Then there are those who think that high-quality brands rarely go for promotions, thus, if a premium brand does go on a promotion, then its quality must have been compromised.

Third, you need to also consider your brand's competitive status and earned brand equity.

If your brand is a strong market leader with just as strong brand equity, it's going to be less vulnerable to threats to its equity value.

Take Clusivol, for example.

This brand is a strong leader brand in the premium vitamin segment (but not the total vitamin market).

It also has an established vitamin brand equity and value. When it went for price promotions, these did little or no damage to its brand equity.

The more recent cases here involve Jollibee and McDonald's.

Both are leading brands have been and are into one promo after another. There's no solid evidence that these promos hurt these brands' equity values.

We're out of space! We'll answer your second question on why companies still do price promos that are most likely to do damage to their brand equity next week.

Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net or text us at 0919-314-5412. God bless!

Migrants find Baguio vendor-friendly, study says

Cool weather, warm people a potent combination

BAGUIO CITY—THE PROLIFERATION of migrant vendors in this mountain resort city can be attributed to the weather and the people's friendliness to vendors, a study by a Malaysian anthropology professor showed.

The study, which was presented in an hour-long video documentary entitled "Sidewalk Capitalism: Being a Street Vendor in Baguio City," was a product of a six-month research by Dr. Daniel Yeoh, a senior fellow of the Asian Public Intellectuals.

"Aside from the cool weather, migrant vendors come here because it is a tourist area. From those I have interviewed from Mindanao who experienced pain and suffering, they come here [and work as] vendors because they saw that the city government was more tolerant of street vendors," Yeoh, an anthropology professor at the Monash University in Malaysia, said in the study presented at the University of the Philippines Baguio early this week.

Yeoh said the study aimed to get the street vendors' view on life based on their actual experience.

Gafur Gunting, vice president of the Muslim Traders Association here, said the economic crisis in Mindanao had pushed most of them to go to Baguio and other provinces in Luzon and earn a living as street vendors.

BAGUIO does not attract just tourists, but entrepreneurs as well.

The study said 3,000 of the city's 260,000 residents are migrant vendors from Pangasinan, Mindanao and Cordillera provinces.

It said migrant vendors have also formed their own associations to protect their welfare.

Yeoh said migrant vendors have either reached college or have earned their degrees. This, he said, only proved that even educated people venture into the underground economy because there are no available jobs after they finish college.

Yeoh said of the 60 street vendors whom he interviewed, he only chose 20 respondents for the actual documentary.

"These vendors are not exactly poor people but people with financial difficulty. There are those who reached college but also engaged in vending because they had no means to support their education," he said.

The respondents said the city government's anti-demolition teams destroy their wares whenever the local anti-peddling law is implemented.

They said those caught are fined P1,000 and their products confiscated.

Zenaida Pingkawet, a fruit vendor who was interviewed in the study, said she suffered from miscarriage after policemen chased her.

"The police chased us and even beat us. I could not remember how many times I was punched because I was more concerned about how I was going to protect the fruits that I had to sell," she said.

"Because of the constant chasing, many women vendors suffered premature delivery," said Geraldine Cacho, former chair of Ornus-Kadamay, a Baguio-based urban poor group.

Emmanuel Reyes, city public order service officer, said their teams had faced resistance from vendors, some of whom would stab their personnel.

"The vendors insist that it is their livelihood. I understand them, but there is a law. I understand that it's poverty which [drives them] to go to the streets and I think the national government should do something about it," he said. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 30, 2006 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 24, 2005
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2005
5. Approval of the 2005 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Amendment to the Amended By-Laws (transfer of the position, powers and duties of the Chairman of the Board in Sections 6.1 and 6.3, Article VI captioned "Officers" to Section 5.4, Article V captioned "Board of Directors")
7. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 25, 2005 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of May 2, 2006 will be entitled to notice and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 25, 2006. Any proxies so received will be validated on May 26, 2006, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 24, 2006

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

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3. Once we have validated the information, your email will serve as your entry for the raffle.
4. All purchases for consideration in the raffle must be received by Stratworks by July 15, 2006.
5. Raffle draw shall be held at Stratworks, Inc. on July 30, 2006 in the presence of an HP representative.
6. Prizes are not convertible to cash.
7. Promotion offer is not valid with any other type of discounting and/or promotional offer.
8. For more information, please contact Joy Alover, Stratworks Inc. at phone number (02) 893-7472 to 73 / 751-3805 to 06

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 18, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.4	248,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36.5	36.5	35.5	36.5	199,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	65	63.5	64.5	3,290,100
China Banking Corp.	890	900	890	895	2,620
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	800
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.43	3,060,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	71.5	72	71.5	72	109,100
International Exch. Bank	39.5	40	39.5	39.5	102,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	38.5	36.5	38.5	3,243,800
Philippine National Bank	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	23,300
Phil. Savings Bank	39	39	39	39	49,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17	17.25	17	17.25	82,200
Security Bank Corp.	52	54	52	53	106,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	43	43.5	43	43.5	21,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	100,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,000
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	390,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	215	215	214	214	2,780
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2100	2100	2100	530
Ivantage Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	4,844,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	47	47	46	47	581,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	48	48	48	48	878,000
Manila Electric Co. A	14	14	13.75	13.75	9,300
Manila Electric Co. B	20.75	21	20.75	20.75	483,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.2	6,230,000
Petron Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.45	4.55	4,830,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.21	410,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.04	1.06	1.02	1.06	714,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	3	3	3	3	15,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3	3	3	3	12,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.75	12,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	37	36	37	222,100
Pancake House Inc.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	2,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	81,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	63.5	63	63.5	59,600
San Miguel Corp. B	81	81	79.5	80	102,300
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10	10	10	10	900
Universal Robina Corp.	21.5	21.5	20.75	20.75	870,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	500,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	1,290,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.54	1.56	2,874,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.8	4.85	240,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.6	1.68	1.5	1.5	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.115	0.12	38,010,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	1,000,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	8,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	7,000,000
Ayala Corp.	420	425	412.5	420	676,680
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	6.2	6.2	5.9	5.9	1,512,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.028	0.026	0.026	84,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.5	696,000
APC Group Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.235	0.235	950,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	251,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.02	1.02	3,432,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	50,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	30,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	9.9	9.9	51,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.1	17,791,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.45	4.45	4.15	4.15	1,623,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.5	3.55	3.4	3.5	1,378,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.42	1.5	483,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.5	7	7	1,550,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,500,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	2,860,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	50,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.145	0.145	3,420,000
SM Investments Corp.	234	237	230	234	121,140
South China Resources Inc.	1.2	1.22	1.18	1.18	720,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	7,600,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.115	0.12	1,620,000
Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	60,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14	14.25	13.75	14	18,763,100
Belle Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.14	1.16	6,703,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	2,360,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.34	2.34	2.26	2.3	1,727,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.76	1.82	1.76	1.76	226,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1	1	1	1	10,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.1	256,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.205	3,670,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	180,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	33,050,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.04	0.0525	0.04	0.046	73,100,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.67	0.67	480,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.46	1.48	15,751,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.125	0.15	0.12	0.12	2,260,000
Gotesco Land, Inc.B	0.14	0.14	0.125	0.13	760,000
Interport Res.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	19,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	14,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.245	280,000
Fil-Estate Land, Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	110,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.54	1.58	46,286,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	3,920,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	800,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.5	11.5	11	11	461,100
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	40,000
SM Development Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	54,000
Sm Prime Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.2	8	8.1	10,117,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.11	0.105	0.105	6,200,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16.25	16.25	16	16	107,200
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.26	1.28	8,041,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	995	995	965	965	57,470
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.8	23,430,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2010	2015	2000	2000	156,770
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	500,000
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	2,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.02	426,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	1,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	1,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.026	425,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	176,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	3,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.5	840,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	286,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.54	1.56	1,116,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	950,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.61	0.63	0.6	0.63	950,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople, Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	143,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	1.5	3	1.5	3	46,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3	691,000
Paxys Inc.	12	12	12	12	2,388,800
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.5	5.5	4.8	4.9	12,910,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.5	5.5	4.95	5.1	5,717,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.009	221,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.5	8.5	8.2	8.3	7,574,000
Benguet Corp. A	12.5	12.5	12	12.5	138,100
Benguet Corp. B	28	28	28	28	1,100
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	10,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.38	30,200,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.4	0.41	0.39	0.4	17,060,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.027	311,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	182,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	632,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	5	5	4.85	4.9	10,307,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	5	5	4.85	4.95	21,850,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	29.5	29.5	28.5	29	174,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	1,470,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.72	0.75	0.71	0.74	3,450,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated, Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.29	0.3	5,940,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.013	0.011	0.012	842,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	221,400,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.58	1.58	1.42	1.42	3,747,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.58	1.58	1.4	1.4	2,391,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	18	18.75	17.75	18.5	1,443,200
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	571,900

Metrobank posts 12.7% jump in 1st quarter profit

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN BANK & TRUST Company, the country's biggest bank, posted a 12.7-percent rise in consolidated first-quarter net profits to P1.8 billion from a year ago.

Metrobank senior vice president Bernard Lapuz said the strong performance in the first three months was driven by increased consolidated interest income on loans, which improved 14.5 percent or P837 million.

While interest expense rose 8.4 percent, he said this was due to more aggressive funds generation, which boosted consolidated deposit levels by P34 billion.

In particular, low-cost current account and savings account (Casa) funds increased by P6.9 billion in line with the bank's focus on bringing down its funding cost. This helped improve the bank's net interest margins while at the same time raising its market competitiveness.

In a disclosure to the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Metrobank group said its other income generated from exchange profits, commissions, trading and investment securities gains surged by 47.5 percent or P1.4 billion from last year's P3 billion.

The group's treasury operations generated higher trading and foreign exchange gains during the period.

Lapuz said continued investor preference for the bank's various trust products also enabled its trust business to contribute in fee income growth.

Total assets under management reached P187 billion for the first quarter. Capital funds of the group, which includes thrift bank unit Philippine Savings Bank and investment house First Metro Investment Corp., stood at P57.6 billion, 21.2-percent higher than the P47.5 billion in the same period last year.

DISCLOSURES

ORIENTAL Petroleum and Minerals Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 29, 5 p.m. at the Ballroom A & B, 4th floor, Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Quezon City. Stockholders of record as of May 26 are entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.

***

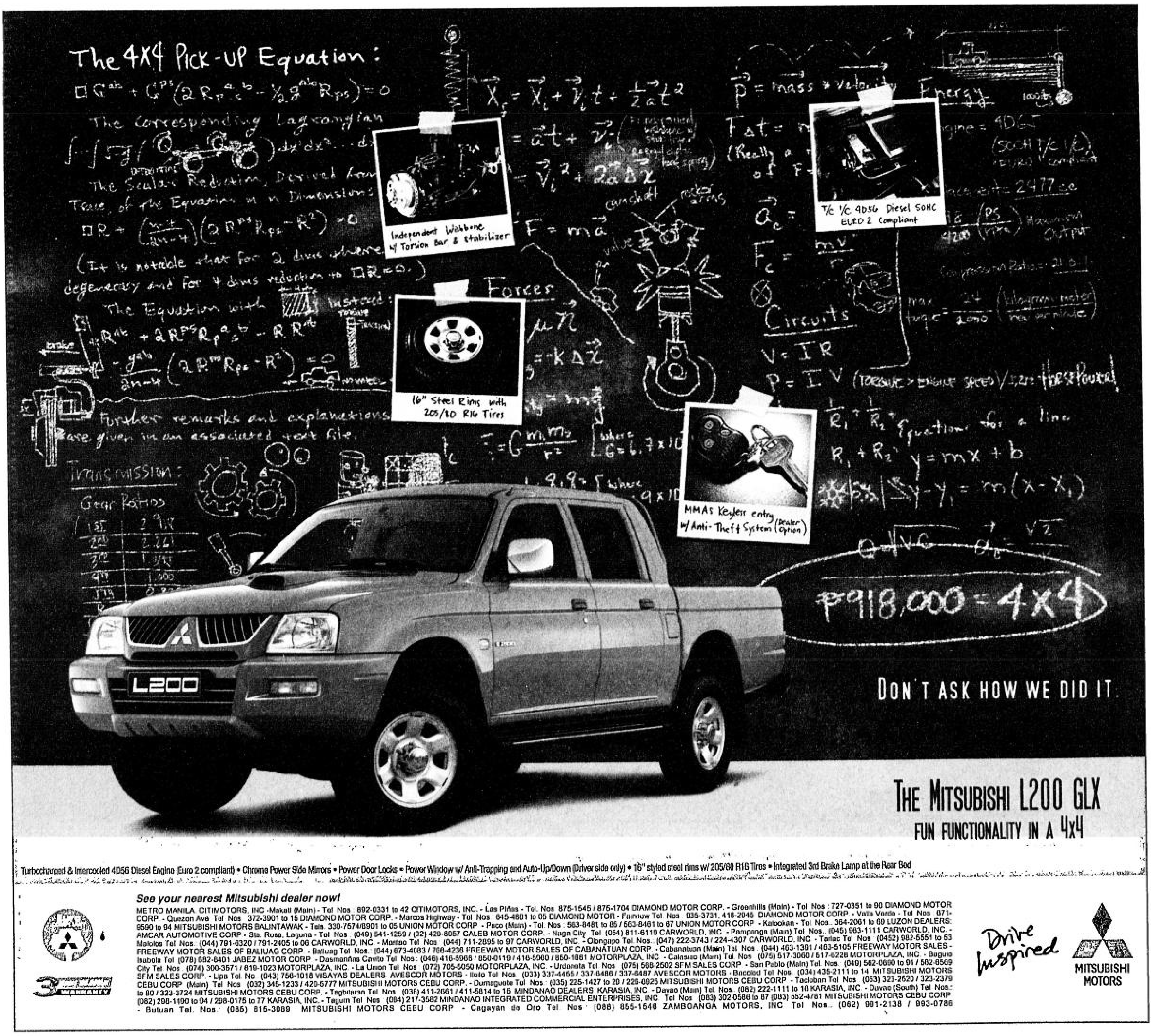
SALCON Power Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 31, 9:30 a.m. at the Manila Polo Club Inc., No. 17 McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

***

LUCIO C. Tan, Mariano Tanenglian, Wilson T. Young, Lucio K. Tan Jr., Michael G. Tan, James L. Yu and Andres C. Co have been elected as directors of **Tanduay Holdings Inc.** during the corporation's stockholders' meeting on May 17. Meanwhile, Peter P. Ong and Carlos R. Alindada were likewise elected as independent directors. ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

May 18, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.784252	1.000000	52.1200
Japan	Yen	0.007069	0.009014	0.4698
United Kingdom	Pound	1.476668	1.882900	98.1367
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.101148	0.128974	6.7221
Switzerland	Franc	0.646060	0.823791	42.9360
Canada	Dollar	0.704502	0.898311	46.8200
Singapore	Dollar	0.496519	0.633112	32.9978
Australia	Dollar	0.596752	0.760919	39.6591
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.080300	2.652590	138.2530
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.209246	0.266809	13.9061
Brunei	Dollar	0.494953	0.631114	32.8937
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000087	0.000111	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.020590	0.026254	1.3684
UAE	Dirham	0.213547	0.272294	14.1920
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.275100	66.4582
Brazil	Real	0.359485	0.458379	23.8907
Denmark	Kroner	0.134157	0.171063	8.9158
India	Rupee	0.017541	0.022366	1.1657
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219371	0.279720	14.5790
Mexico	New Peso	0.070010	0.089270	4.6528
New Zealand	Dollar	0.485936	0.619617	32.2944
South Africa	Rand	0.122732	0.156495	8.1565
Korea	Won	0.000837	0.001067	0.0556
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024850	0.031686	1.6515


The 4X4 Pick-UP Equation:
Independent Wishbone w/ Torsion Bar & Stabilizer
T/C I/C 4D56 Diesel SOHC EURO 2 Compliant
16" Steel Rims with 205/80 R16 Tires
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Forgetting the small farmer

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

PHILIPPINE ENERGY SUPPLY MIX
(In Million Barrels of Fuel Equivalent)

		Local Production	Net Imports	Total
2003	Crude Oil	4.72	81.42	86.14
	Oil Products		15.14	15.14
2004	Crude Oil	4.72	78.01	82.73
	Oil Products		28.49	28.49

"FORGET US NOT." THIS MAY WELL BE THE battle cry of the Alyansa Agrikultura, the largest farmer-fisherfolk coalition today. Since its founding on Jan. 21, 2003, it has fully supported the Department of Agriculture's efforts in trying to get the P33-billion annual budget legally mandated by the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (Afma). Unfortunately, the DA has been getting less than P16 billion a year.

The Alyansa also backed the DA in opposing a non-level global playing field through less rapid liberalization. This is because developed countries have not meaningfully decreased their massive agricultural subsidies, while requiring developing countries with minimal subsidies like ours to immediately implement sudden and deep tariff reductions.

Last May 16, the Legislative and Executive Development Advisory Council met to discuss 11 priority measures up for discussion in the 17 session days remaining before Congress takes a break in June. Sen. Richard Gordon said, "I think realistically, maybe about four measures should be passed." We hope the small farmer is not forgotten by ignoring the biofuels bill.

Biofuels bill

Last November 2005, the House of Representatives approved the Biofuels Act of 2005, mandating the use of bioethanol or ethyl alcohol as transport fuel. If this measure is given priority, principal author Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said: "We will boost employment in the countryside to 300,000 new farm workers and an estimated 10,000 ethanol plant employees spread across the nation."

Other benefits are foreign exchange savings of $825 million over a 10-year period; a guaranteed demand of an average of 300 million liters of ethanol annually, and, because it is a clean fuel, billions of pesos in savings from medical costs and lost income caused by air pollution.

The table above shows our dangerous 96-percent dependence on imported oil.

Our net oil imports are increasing. Since these are mostly fossil fuels that are not renewable, supply will increasingly get scarcer with the consequent further skyrocketing of prices.

With our own manufactured biofuels, we can have oil security in addition to food security. We have more than enough means to produce the necessary raw materials for alternative fuels: 2.4 million hectares of corn, 3.5 million hectares of coconut, 390,000 hectares of sugar cane and 330,000 hectares of cassava and camote. This will mean added income to our farmers.

Improvements needed

However, an amendment is needed so that the small farmer is not forgotten. In the bill's current version, there is a National Biofuels Board that will supervise the implementation of the biofuel national strategy. Of the 13 board members, four are from the private sector. They are "from the feed stock producers for bioethanol, distillery industry, petroleum industry, and automobile manufacturers." Not one comes from the farmer sector, which provides the necessary raw materials. It is imperative that farmer.interests and insights be represented in this board.

We must also institute a paradigm in our current development strategy. Today, we give our farmers little support, as indicated by the DA budget being less than half of what Afma mandates. We hit our farmers with a double whammy by "out liberalizing" even the WTO. Whereas the WTO allows us an average maximum agricultural tariff of 35 percent, we insist on exposing our farmers to unfair competition with a very low applied 8 percent tariff.

This contrasts with Thailand's very successful agriculture policy. They give their farmers a much larger agriculture budget. In addition, with the same WTO maximum tariff of 35 percent, they apply a much higher 29 percent agricultural tariff rate.

Other recommendations

To ensure our biofuel future does not encounter the same sad fate as our agriculture, we must provide a tariff regime that will sufficiently protect our new biofuel industry. More importantly, we should provide the farmers with the budget and support services necessary to be globally competitive. Otherwise, we will be importing our raw materials. Our 300,000 farm jobs will be lost. Even our processing jobs may be lost because of decreased global competitiveness resulting from no assured local supply.

The private sector can also initiate its own improvements. For example, creative profit sharing mechanisms can be institutionalized in the form of projects such as small lending schemes and outright grants.

If the small farmer is not forgotten by Congress in the next few days by hopefully passing the biofuels bill, and if the farmer is acknowledged by the government and the private sector as not only a raw material supplier, but also a key partner in building the industry, then biofuels will indeed have a bright future.

(The author is Agriwatch chair. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635)

PSE reports 61.3% rise in net foreign buying

Solid proof of investors' confidence in the economy

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

NET FOREIGN BUYING IN THE stock market from January to April soared 61.3 percent to P19.5 billion from P12.09 billion a year ago as investor sentiment on the country's economic and political prospects improved, the Philippine Stock Exchange said yesterday.

Net foreign buying is the difference between total foreign buying and selling.

The PSE also said total foreign buying during the four-month period rose 17.9 to P109.72 billion from year ago's P93.09 billion, outpacing the 11.4-percent increase in foreign selling to P90.23 billion from P81 billion last year.

Francis Lim, PSE president and chief executive officer, said the surge in foreign buying was a proof of investors' confidence in the economy and in the country's political stability.

"Noise from bitter political bickering has subsided, and the lack of unnecessary distraction from the political arena has helped investors focus on good news from the economic and corporate front," Lim explained.

The stock market earlier recorded hefty gains but posted a steep 84.8-point drop yesterday to 2,378.74, its biggest drop in points since Jan. 17 , 2001 when it shed 93 points.

The market dropped 3.4 percent yesterday, its sharpest decline since July 5 last year.

Local traders attributed the market's steep fall to the Wall Street's more than 200-point plunge overnight after US investors were alarmed by a nearly 1 percent hike in April inflation.

Foreign selling yesterday amounted to P1.54 billion, higher than the buying of P978 million.

Despite yesterday's performance, Lim expects foreign buying to grow in the coming months.

On the average, the daily total foreign buying amounted to P487.75 million during the second week of April, P988.52 million in the third week of April and reached P1.5 billion at the end of the said month.

Lim also confirmed that foreigners sold on the average P427.6 million worth of stocks during the second week of April, P716.49 million on the following week and P1.34 billion on the last week of April.

After deducting the selling orders, daily net foreign buying averaged P60.15 million, P272.04 million and P157.75 million during the respective weeks in comparison.

Lim said net foreign buying dropped in the last week of April as an offshoot of the heavy selling on April 24, when foreigners sold P1.71 billion worth of stocks.

VAT collection hits ₱16.1B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT RAISED P16.1 BILlion in additional revenue through the Reformed VAT Law (RVAT) in the first quarter, the Department of Finance said yesterday.

In a statement, the DOF said the amount of RVAT collection in the first three months of the year was about 4 percent higher than the target of P15.5 billion.

This, the DOF said, meant the government was on track to meeting the P75-billion full-year incremental revenue target of the government.

Of the total RVAT collections in the first quarter, P5.1 billion was contributed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), which slightly missed its target of P5.6 billion.

The shortfall of the BIR, however, was compensated by the over-performance of the Bureau of Customs. The DOF said the BOC collected P11 billion in additional revenue from the RVAT, higher than its target of P12.2 billion.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said in a statement that the higher-than-programmed RVAT collection by the BOC was attributed to the increase in oil prices. The higher the prices of oil, the higher the amount of tariff collection, he explained.

The BIR failed to meet its RVAT collection target but the finance official said the agency was expected to catch up in the coming months.

Republic of the Philippines
Securities and Exchange Commission
Metro Manila

IN THE MATTER OF:
AYALA CORPORATION,
Registrant.

Registration of Securities

x--x

AMENDED NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on May 2, 2006, a sworn statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of Ayala Corporation for the registration of P3,000,000,000.00 worth of Preferred Class "B" shares with the par value and issue value of P100.00 per share representing 30,000,000 of such shares. Ayala Corporation is reserving the right to increase the offer size to a maximum of 58,000,000 Preferred Class "B" shares worth P5,800,000,000 in the event of oversubscription, subject to the Commission's requirements.

According to the papers presented, the following persons are the officers/directors of Ayala Corporation:

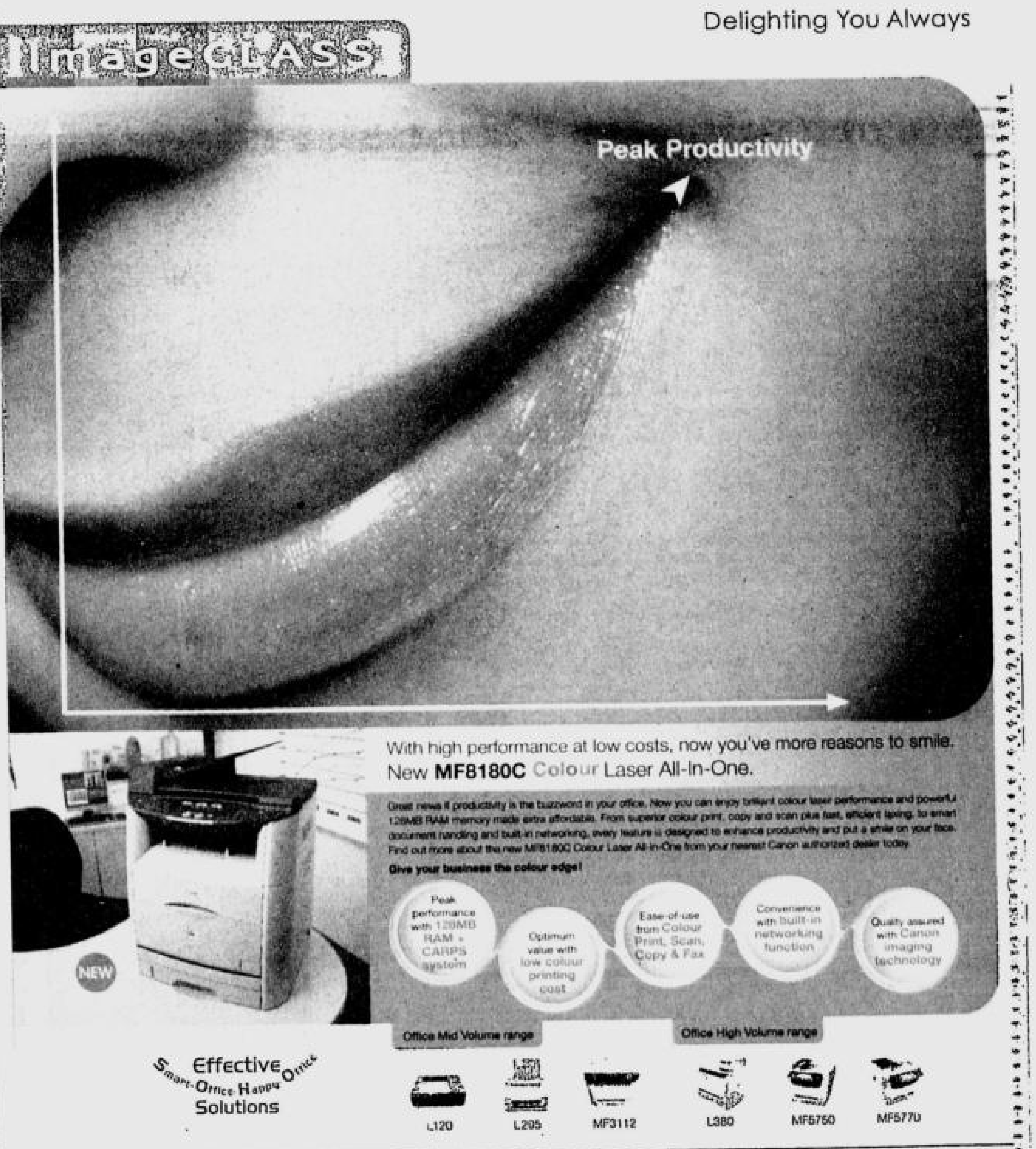
Board of Directors (as of April 7, 2006):
- Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II
- Fernando Zobel de Ayala
- Aristón Estrada, Jr.
- Meneleo J. Carlos Jr.
- Xavier P. Loinaz
- Mercedita S. Nolledo
- Masakazu Okabayashi

Executive Officers (as of April 7, 2006):

Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II	Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Fernando Zobel de Ayala	President and Chief Operating Officer
Aristón Estrada, Jr.	Adviser to the Chairman
Mercedita S. Nolledo	Senior Managing Director and Corporate Secretary
Gerardo C. Ablaza, Jr.	Senior Managing Director
Delfin L. Lazaro	Chief Finance Officer
Antonino T. Aquino	Managing Director
Jaime I. Ayala	Managing Director
Charles C. Cosgrove	Managing Director
Aurelio R. Montinola III	Member, Management Committee
Arthur R. Tan	Managing Director
Rufino Luis T. Manotok	Managing Director and Corporate Information Officer
Renato O. Marzan	Managing Director and Assistant Corporate Secretary and Compliance Officer
Ramon G. Opulencia	Managing Director and Treasurer
John Philip S. Orbeta	Managing Director

The Registration Statement, as well as the papers attached thereto are available for inspection during business hours at the Securities and Exchange Commission, EDSA, Mandaluyong. Copies of the Registration Statement will be furnished to interested parties at such reasonable charge as the Commission may prescribe.

(ORIGINAL SIGNED)
Justina Callangan, Director, Corporate Finance Department
Securities and Exchange Commission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In the Philippines, Emerson Network Power has recently appointed Lamco as its new distributor for Liebert's Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) and related products in the Philippines. Lamco's key role will be to distribute Liebert UPS widely across the Philippines, so that even the simplest SOHO desktop applications would have the benefit of being protected by a Liebert Solution.

"Uptime solutions are a critical economic issue for the SOHO market. Downtime and power failures bring real-time business operations to a standstill and can costs thousands to SOHOs, which rely heavily on short-term revenues," said Gene Hayden, VP Sales & Marketing & Asia Pacific General Manager, Emerson Network Power. "With the growing susceptibility of business to downtime, caused by climatic and other environmental factors, UPS has become a necessity in the SOHO space".

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For information on the full Emerson Network Power Power Quality portfolio, please visit their website on www.EmersonNetworkPower.com or www.Liebert.com

Unilab sustains campaign against malnutrition

UNITED LABORATORIES INC (UNILAB), THE COUNTRY'S leading pharmaceutical company, has intensified its efforts to help fight child malnutrition in the country. For the first quarter of 2006 alone, some 1,500 children have benefited from Unilab's feeding and nutrition programs conducted in key cities in the country in partnership with companies, parishes, non-government and socio-civic organizations.

Malnutrition is a serious global health problem, annually claiming 5.5 million children under five years of age. The Philippines, with 3 million children below five who are undernourished, is one of the countries with the largest number. This child nutrition indicator covers moderate and severe cases from 1996 to 2005. Thirty percent of the age group suffers from stunting or being too short for one's age while six percent has been classified as wasted or dangerously thin.

According to the Department of Health, the malnutrition situation in the country has not substantially improved in the last 15 years and child malnutrition rate has remained at 30 percent level for over a decade.

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) said that developing countries like the Philippines should do far more for their undernourished children to meet a long-time United Nations goal to reduce by half the number of the world's underweight infants by 2015. In a report, Unicef Country Representative Dr. Nicholas Alipui disclosed that damages of malnutrition to children include lower intelligence, reduced physical capacity and passing malnutrition to the next generation. "All these result to reduction in productivity and sluggish economic growth, which perpetuate the cycle of poverty," he said in a news report.

Realizing the urgent need for collaborative efforts to curb the growing malnutrition problem in the country, Unilab stepped up its efforts by initiating partnerships with major private corporations, parish networks and non-government and socio-civic organizations for joint feeding and nutrition programs in such areas as Valenzuela, Kalookan, Pasig, Pasay and Bulacan. These are initial activities which Unilab and its partners hope to deploy in more areas in the country to reach out to more malnourished children.

Just recently, Unilab, through its Unilab Medical Education and Development (Umed) office, organized a conference on malnutrition for over 500 healthcare professionals to discuss the state of malnutrition in country, the current feeding practices among infants and young children, and the initiatives to help counter malnutrition. Resource persons from Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, University of the Philippines College of Medicine and Wayne State University were invited to discuss the issues.

"We believe that as a Filipino pharmaceutical company, it is our social responsibility to help in addressing major health issues in the country, like malnutrition, using our available resources," says Unilab chair Jocelyn Campos Hess. "We are doing this because this is the right thing to do."

Unilab is set out to conduct more continuing medical education programs for healthcare professionals to update them on current health issues and encourage them to participate in the solution. Unilab has likewise targeted more partnerships with organizations for the conduct of feeding and nutrition programs in more areas starting this year. All these initiatives are consistent with Unilab's social mission of providing safe, effective and affordable healthcare and improve the health of as many Filipinos as possible.

ELLEN'S OPENS 2ND BRANCH IN MANDAUE CITY

Ellen's Aesthetics and Whitening Center recently opened its 2nd branch in Cebu in Mandaue City. This is the center's 12th branch nationwide. Ellen Lising, president, said the center now has more than 26 years of skin care and permanent cosmetics expertise. It offers a wide line-up of skin care and whitening treatments such as facial, diamond peel, laser light hair removal, underarm whitening scrub, foot whitening, white glow body treatment and the new SPRT (skin photo rejuvenation treatment). Also available exclusively at Ellen's is the whitening phenomenon Miracle Whitening Cream, proven results in just 7 days for the face, underarm, groin, nape and other dark spots of the body. Regular celebrity clients include Melanie Marquez, Alma Concepcion, Sheryn Regis, and Elizabeth Oropesa. The center is located at the 2nd floor, Unit 204, Tulip Center (fronting Norkis), AS Fortuna Avenue, Mandaue City. For inquiries, call (032)255-0674 (Cebu City), or 413-3375. Shown at the Mandaue branch opening are (from left) Angela Calina ('Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition' housemate), Lising, actor Patrick Garcia and beauty queen Daisy Reyes.

WOW!
MAGIC SING
WOW!

IAJE INKS DEAL WITH REGINE VELASQUEZ

In-A-Jiffy Enterprises (IAJE) recently inked an endorsement deal for its WOW videoke microphone with 'Asia's Songbird' Regine Velasquez. This represents the brand's major marketing thrust, by connecting a variety of integrated marketing activities with its new packaging/logo design and TVC. IAJE/G2K Corp are the exclusive distributors of WOW, the best selling Magic Sing videoke microphone in the country. Shown are (from left) Mike Sanchez, marketing and promotions manager IAJE, Olive Sanchez, general manager IAJE, Regine Velasquez and Cris Llamo, chief operations officer, IAJE.

Odor remover, 0-chlorine pools

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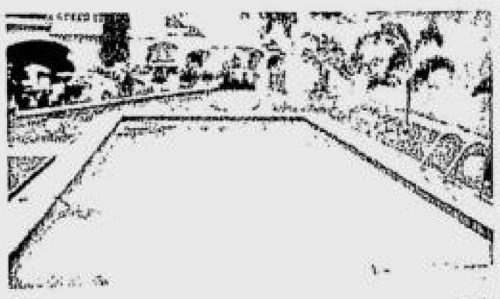

Electromex also builds inexpensive, portable water treatment systems and Ozonators for small Jacuzzis all the way to Olympic-size swimming pools, eliminating the use of dangerous chlorine and muriatic acids. Using the Electromex swimming pool zero-chlorine water Ozonator removes algae, fungus and molds instantly. It's like swimming in a giant mineral water pool.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ChinaBank dollar savings accounts and certificate of time deposits of the late DIVINA B. PERALTA was adjudicated thru Extra-Judicial Settlement by her surviving heirs and shall be released thru S.P.A. Jesus B. Peralta as per Doc. No. 388, Page 77, Book IV, Series of 2006, of Notary Public Henry S. Banares, ARN 19348.

(PDI– May 12, 19 & 26, 2006)

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CHRIST THE KING COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISE

CHRIST THE KING C
57th COMMENCEM

National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) President & CEO Dr. Alan T. Ortiz was the graduation rites speaker at the 57th Commencement Exercises of the Christ the King College in Calbayog City recently. While in town, Dr. Ortiz also inaugurated the P865.5 million Wright-Calbayog Transmission Line Project of TransCo which upon completion will provide Calbayog and its neighboring towns with dependable, affordable and renewable energy from Leyte's geothermal fields.

In his message, he said "success does not always go to the strongest, the handsomest or the most beautiful, nor the fastest person in class. Success goes to the stubborn, the persistent, the self-reliant, the learner, the forever curious, and the perpetual dreamer."

OBITUARIES

MARIA S. AQUINO

Died in the Grace of our Lord on May 12, 2006 at the age of 62.

Her bereaved children: **Danilo** and **Vergie Aquino, Eduardo-Jenet Aquino, Emmeline Aquino, Pedro-Joan Aquino, Marife Aquino** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at San Mateo, Rizal.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 20, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at the Paraiso Memorial Park, San Mateo, Rizal.

"Well done, my good and faithful servant. Come and share your Master's happiness." Matthew 25:22

REMEDIOS "Dading" N. ELA

of Sta. Cruz, Zambales
Peacefully joined our Lord on May 15, 2006
in the City of Antipolo

Her loving husband: **former Mayor Norberto (†)**; children **Fe** and **Bill**, **Norberto Jr.** and **Anita**, **Josefa** and **Alejandro Jr.**, **Teodora Victoria & Claro**, **Remedios** and **Joey**, **Francisco & Yesa**, **Felipe**, **Romeo**, **Nancy**, **Elena**, **Che-che**; grandchildren **Gareth**, **Byron**, **Philippa**, **Brendan**, **Ryan & Courtney**, **Owen**, **Mark Norby**, **Gino**, **Alexus**, **Johanna**, **Jericho**, **Theodore**, **Victor**, **Claro III**, **JRussel**, **RJorrel**, **Trizia**, **Raegis**, **Cyril**, **Justin**, **Patricia**, **Francheska**, **Alexander**, **Aldrin**, **Alfonso**; great grandchildren **Dominique**, **Dillon**, & **Danielle**; loving brothers **Gualberto (†)**, **Pedro (†)**, **Alejandro (†)**, **Bernardo (†)**; endearing sisters **Cecilia & Modesta** and sisters-in-law **Lourdes**, **Inez (†)**, **Olympia (†) & Felicitas**.

Her remains lie in state at the St. Peter Memorial Homes, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, and will be home in Naulo, Sta. Cruz, Zambales on May 20, Saturday.

Interment will be on Wednesday, the 24th of May 2006, after the morning requiem Mass at St. Michael Parish Church.

Badminton tournament

THE RIZAL HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI BADMINTON CLUB IN COOPERATION with the RHSAAI will hold the 2nd RHSA President's Cup Badminton tournament on May 21, 12 noon at Sheridan Badminton Ctr., Pioneer, Mandaluyong City. For inquiries, contact Mr. Bong at 09179644716 or Mrs. Santiago at 09198837235.

PMAP, JRU conduct human resource planning and acquisition program

THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT CENTER (HRMDC) of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) partners with Jose Rizal University in holding a certificate course in Human Resource Planning and Acquisition to introduces the value of manpower planning as a strategic business tool that goes beyond mere forecasting of numbers; and recruitment and selection as more than just hiring people. PMAP and the faculty of Jose Rizal University designed the Certificate in Human Resource Planning and Acquisition (CHRPA) course, which will run for eight Saturdays starting May 20 to July 8, 2006 at the Graduate School Building of Jose Rizal University in Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City. The CHRPA course is part of PMAP's Diploma in Human Resource Management (DHRM) program. Completion of five PMAP certificate courses merits a post-graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management. The other certificate courses are Certificate in Human Resource Development , Certificate in Organization Development, Certificate in Labor Relations, and Certificate in Compensation Management . For more information, PMAP may be contacted thru telephone numbers 726-1532/81/88.

A Message of Gratitude
The Family
of

Jose Y. Campos

who passed away peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
on May 1, 2006 at the age of 84.

His loving wife
BEATRICE

His loving children
JOY
BUTCH & OLLIE
JEFFREY
ELIZABETH

His loving grandchildren
CLINTON & JACQUELINE
CHRISSY
MIKEY
JEANETTE
JACLYN & LUKE
JAY
JANELLE
JAMIE
NIÑA

conveys our sincerest gratitude to everyone
who expressed their sympathy
in our moment of sorrow.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
John 14:6

"Our true home is Heaven and Jesus Christ whose return
*we long for will come to save us" **Php 3:20***

Our Dearly Beloved

LEONOR ESMERALDA ASERON

*Peacefully joined her Creator and son **ILDRICH** & grandson **LEE MICHAEL***
on May 15, 2006 at the age of 71.

Her bereaved husband **ILDEFONSO**; daughters and sons-in-law **LEONIDA & CARMELITO, LORYLENE & VIRGILIO, LEIRIAN & BRADERICK** and sons **ITHURIEL & IVARLUSKI**; her grandchildren **MYTZLE, MAE, BRYEN & CRISNEL, DIDIER, ILDRICH, JADE, TONI, KRISHA, KOLEEN** and **KAEL** and her great grandchild **KAYVEE,** request YOU to join in thanksgiving to God for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment is on May 21, 2006 at 9:30 a.m.
at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

REALTOR VICENTE OSIAS ORPIANO

Died in the Grace of our Lord on May 17, 2006 at the age of 85.

His loving wife, **Carmen (†)**; children **Corazon (†), Elsa, Mildred, Naty, Olga, Sonia, Vince, Manuel, Amado, Mike, Buds, JR** and **Tess**; grandchildren **Jen, Jon, Glory, Amy, Michael, Gail, Mark, Aljay, John, Jordan, Janine, Ivan, Vlad, Michael, Oliver, Diane, Nico, Arlene** and **Kanoa**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel D, La Funeraria Paz,
Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.
Interment will be on Tuesday, May 23, 2006
at the Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora Ave., Quezon City.

MERCEDES PIEDAD LIGOT

March 2, 1915 - May 17, 2006
(Widow of Dr. Fernando C. Ligot)

Her beloved children: Dr. ANTONIO and SYLVIA CRUZ, CARMELITA and KENNETH BUTTERFIELD, LORENZO and Ma. CRISTINA CUENCA, CECILIA and AMANTE BERSAMIN Jr., ALEJANDRO and CHARITY RANADA and MAURICE; grandchildren, great grandchildren, and relatives give thanks to the Lord for the blessing of her life.

Her body lies in state at Chapel 3, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City. Cremation will be on Sunday morning and her ashes will be brought to Laoag City shortly after.

In lieu of flowers, we would appreciate donations to The Good News Clinic and Hospital in Banaue, Ifugao and Sacred Heart Chapel, Laoag City.

Death Notice

DOMINADOR J. SABINAY

"Amo/Mang Domeng"

Born Oct. 20, 1944

Died in the grace of our Lord
on May 16, 2006 at age of 61.

He is survived by his wife Tita M. Sabinay; children: Emily, Eddie, Shirley & Normel, and Sheryl & Jason.

His body lies at Guerrero Chapel, Guerrero St., San Juan, M.M.

Interment will be tomorrow, May 20, 2006 after the 2:30 p.m. Mass at San Felipe Neri Church at Romano Catolico Cemetery, Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City.

MARIANITO 'NITOY' O. SABANA, SR.

Passed away on May 15, 2006
at the age of 67.

Funeral Mass will be on May 20, 2006 at 9:00 A.M. at
Funeraria Nacional, Chapel 2-C.

Interment will follow at Himlayang Pilipino
immediately after the mass.

More **CLASSIFIED ADS**
on pages A8, A10, A23 & A26

Our Dearly Beloved

CECILIO "Ogie" DOMINGO OBISPO

Now peacefully rests in the infinite
Grace and Goodness of the Lord at the age of 72.

His wife **Rizalina**, children **Ma. Carmela & Jesus Antonio, Juan Carlos**, grandchildren **Jeremy Michael, Jessica Marie** and **Jamie Margaret**, Relatives and Friends request the Pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel O, Guadalupe, Makati City and will be moved to Loyola Memorial Park Marikina, May 20, 2006 at 11:00 am.

Funeral Mass at Loyola Memorial Chapel O, Guadalupe, Makati City at 9:00am, May 20, 2006.

BUSINESS

Indophil ups estimate of Tampakan reserves

By Christine A. Gaylican

INDOPHIL RESOURCES NL OF Australia has raised its estimates of the mineral reserves of the Tampakan copper-gold mine in Mindanao.

Indophil managing director Tony Robbins said in an interview yesterday that the new mineral resource estimates placed copper reserves at 250,000 metric tons, up 32 percent from the initial estimates, while gold reserves were set at 150,000 ounces a year.

The revised figures were based on the results of feasibility studies and drillings done at the Tampakan mines bordering the provinces of South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur.

"This increases the viability of the mine project, which requires more than a billion dollars to develop before production commences in 2010," Robbins noted.

He added that the new mineral resource estimates would make Tampakan the biggest undeveloped copper field in Southeast Asia.

Indophil Resources Ltd., which is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange, has partnered with the Alcantara Group's Alsons Development and Investment Corp. to develop the mine.

Another major investor is X-Strata Plc. based in Switzerland.

Initial estimates showed that the Tampakan reserve, considered a world-class mine, has a gross potential value of about $14 billion.

Encouraged by the prospects of the country's mineral industry and the government's "all-out" support to their operations, Australian mining firm Indophil Resources NL said it was now considering expanding its mineral exploration program in the Philippines.

Indophil is the mother firm of the Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI), which is now conducting a pre-feasibility study on the copper and gold deposits at the boundaries of Tampakan in South Cotabato, Columbio in Sultan Kudarat and Kiblawan in Davao del Sur.

UBS says RP spending cuts not sustainable

Revenue generation better way to plug budget gap

By Michelle V. Remo

INVESTMENT BANK UBS HAS WARNED THE government that cutting back on expenditures was not the best way to solve its budget problem, adding that the fiscal performance in April was "disappointing."

In its assessment of the Philippines' fiscal sector, UBS stressed that enhancing revenue-generation was a much preferred way of improving the budget position.

What happened in April was a tightening of government expenditures compensating for weak tax collection, UBS noted.

"With non-interest spending down to less than 12 percent of GDP (gross domestic product) in 2005, and infrastructure and social services in urgent need of upgrades, this (controlling expenditure) is not a sustainable source of further budget deficit reduction," the European bank said.

"Non-interest spending" refers to money spent on budget items other than the payment of interest on government debts, such as capital outlay and basic services.

The Department of Finance earlier reported that the national government posted a P17.6-billion budget surplus in April, putting it closer to meeting the full-year deficit target of P125 billion from last year's P146.8 billion.

The surplus, the highest since 1998, was achieved despite the failure of the Bureau of Internal Revenue to meet its tax-collection target for the month.

Officials explained that the surplus was due to restrained spending.

Data showed that the government spent 25-percent less than the expenditure target for April.

This was despite earlier pronouncements from fiscal authorities that the government would adopt a pump-priming policy, under which it should maximize the over P1 trillion proposed national budget for this year.

The government disbursed only P77.4 billion in April compared with the P103.3-billion program.

The expenditure in April was also 7-percent lower than the P83.4 billion spent during the same month last year.

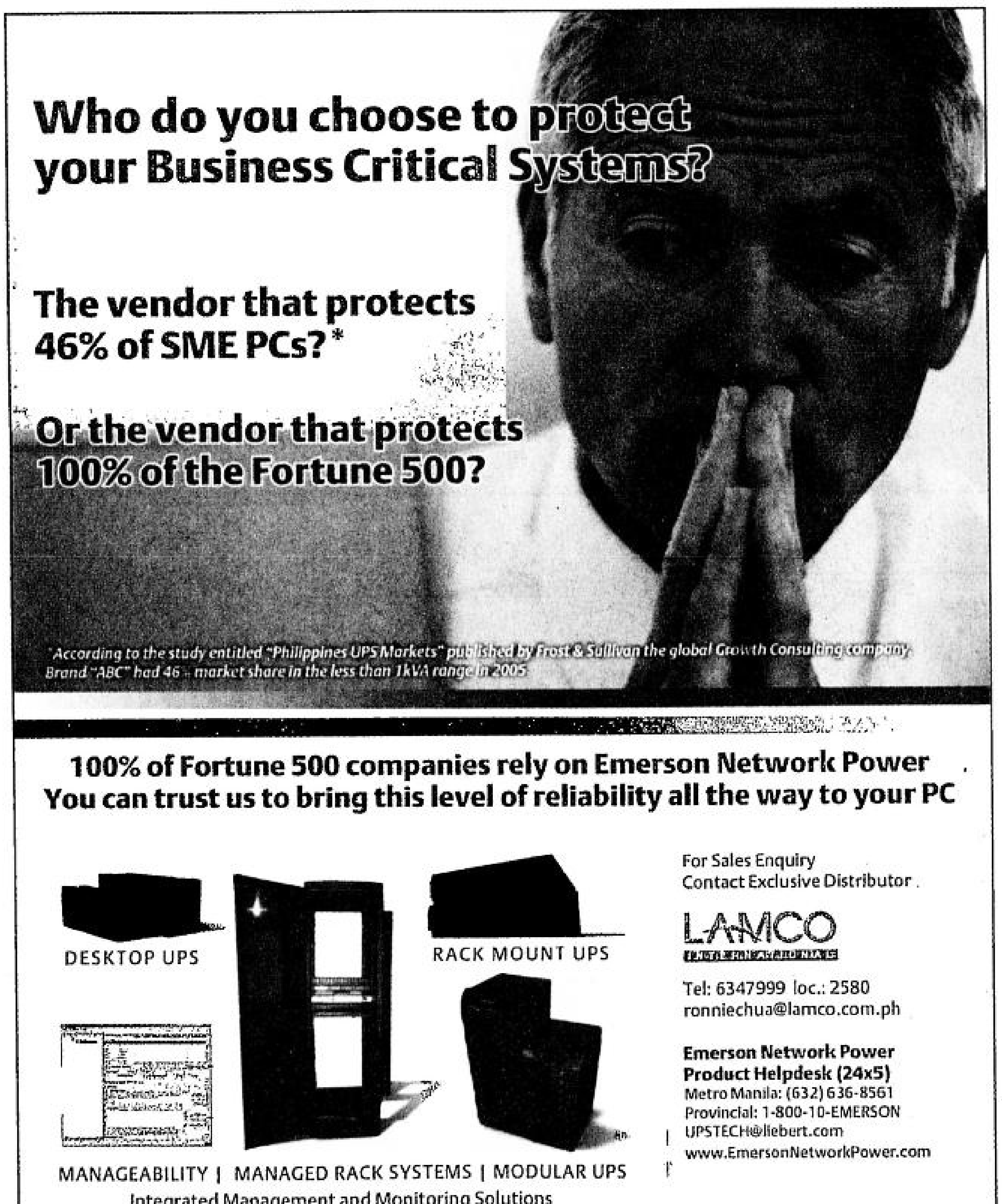
UBS said it expected government to be forced to keep a restrained spending in the coming months unless authorities see signs of BIR recovering from the April shortfall.

The BIR, which accounts for about 60 percent of government revenues, collected only P71.3 billion during the month compared with its P78.6-billion target.

But Finance Secretary Margarito Teves had said that the government was still bent on meeting its programmed capital-outlay spending for the second quarter, as concerned agencies were expected to undertake major infrastructure development projects in May and June.

The government has allocated P39.3 billion for capital outlay in the second quarter.

Infrastructure spending in the Philippines accounts for only about 3 percent of the country's gross domestic product, below the 5-percent benchmark set by the World Bank for boosting economic growth.



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Investors put in $22M in Subic

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INVESTORS ARE PUTTING IN AT LEAST $22 million to build more first-class accommodation in Subic as authorities push for the further development of the freeport as a tourist destination.

Armand C. Arreza, chief executive of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said Legenda Hotel wanted to build a second hotel in the freeport.

"The plan is to build a structure with 300 rooms, which would possibly be added with 200 more," Arreza said. "This $20-million project would provide needed five-star accommodation in Subic."

He explained that the plan was being entertained even as the SBMA board decided not to condone Legenda's arrears totaling P750 million.

Arreza said a payment schedule had been set where the investor would shell out P150 million over three years.

Also, he added that Asia Hotel, which has a boutique hotel on Boracay Island, was looking at building a structure with 50 rooms near Nabasan Beach for $2 million.

"SBMA welcomes these projects because we want to increase the stock of five-star accommodation here," Arreza said. "Currently, the available rooms in Subic are first-class and standard ones."

Another possible project was Landco Pacific's residential resort in Hidden Beach, although this would be "difficult."

Arreza said Landco wanted to build the resort on a 35-hectare area under a 50-year lease.

In March, SBMA officials said the agency was offering discount rates on aeronautical fees of up to 80 percent in an effort to attract more airline operators and boost tourism in the areas.

The officials said SBMA was looking into the possibility of SBIA being able to service routes to "any point in Asia."

Current carriers using SBIA include Inter-Island Airlines which offers chartered flights to Manila and Taiwan; Mandarin Air with flights to and from Taiwan; Cebu Pacific with flights from Incheon in South Korea; Air Philippines with flights to and from Hong Kong.

3G phone prices seen going down

By Daxim I. Lucas

PRICES OF THIRD-GENERATION (3G) NETwork cellular phones may drop to the much anticipated $100 a handset threshold within one year, helping fuel a boom in the service.

This prediction was made yesterday by an official of Smart Communications Inc. as the company launched a service that would allow its subscribers to watch sports programs on their mobile phones.

"We could see a handset price of $100 within one year," usage marketing and e-services group head Dan Ibarra said in a briefing.

Once this threshold is breached, the industry will see subscriber additions of up to one million a month, similar to what was seen during the boom of the existing second-generation network in the late 1990s, he added.

Ibarra said that nobody knows at present just how big the 3G service can be worth since it remains in its infancy locally as well as abroad.

"But we've made a bet on it," he said, adding that Smart is counting on consumers to make the 3G network their most productive tool for accessing services like entertainment and communication.

Ibarra's prediction of a rapid drop in 3G handset prices is, so far, the most aggressive made by a representative of a local network. Globe Telecom Inc. president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr. earlier made the same prediction although he aired a more cautious note on the rate of the new technology's mass acceptance.

At present, the cheapest 3G phones sell for the equivalent of $225 per unit, while the most advanced models sell for as much as $500 each.

Yesterday, Smart, together with sister firm ePLDT and Wolfpac, signed an agreement with IMG Media for the latter to provide 3G sports content that can be viewed via Smart's 3G phones.

IMG Media is a division of IMG, the world's largest sports and entertainment company.

The 3G sports content will cover news about a range of sports, including tennis, golf and football, as well as local events like the MVP Cup and the JVC Badminton Open.

Local sports are also covered with instructional content which will allow users to learn techniques from the professionals.

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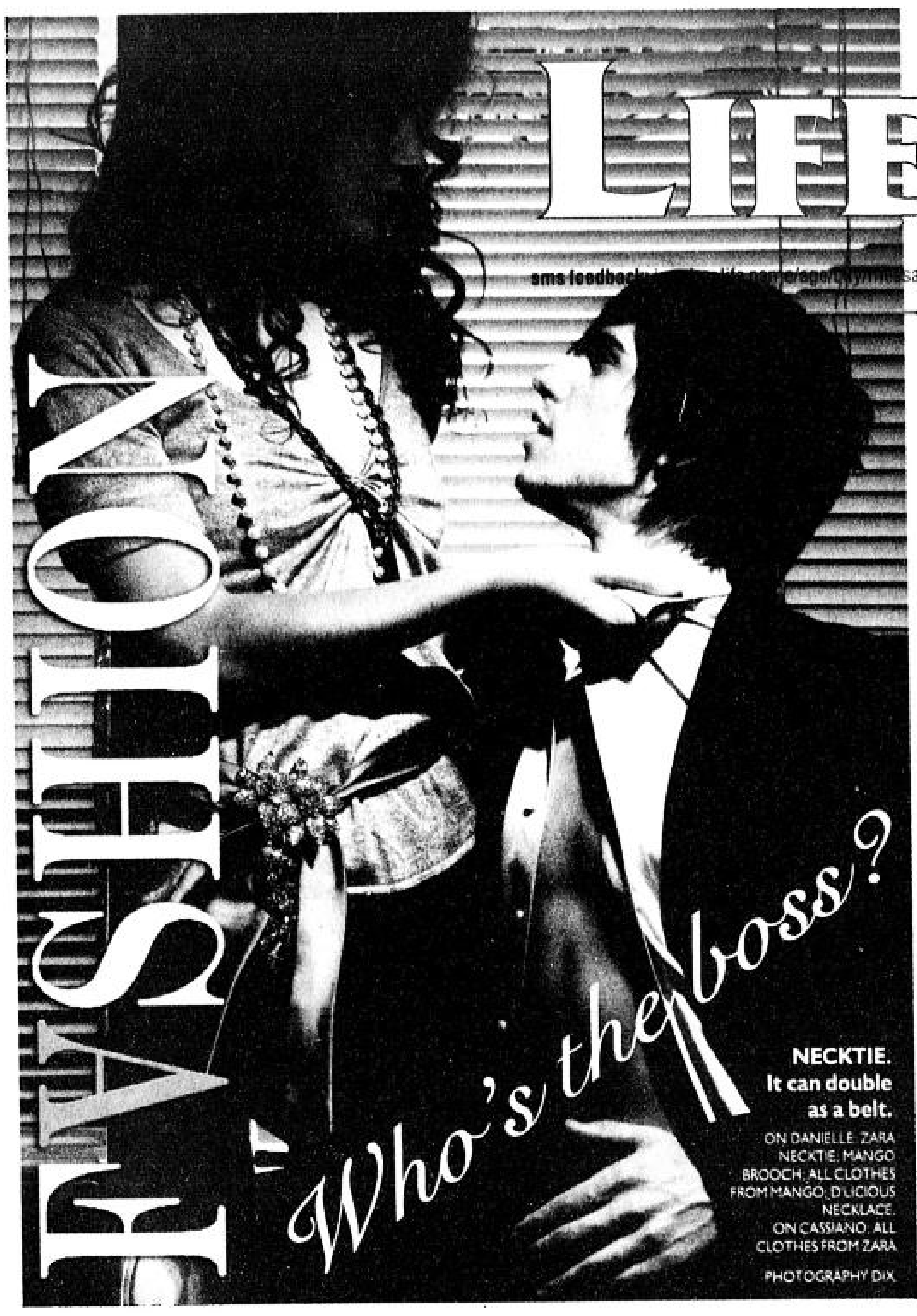

NECKTIE. It can double as a belt.

ON DANIELLE: ZARA NECKTIE; MANGO BROOCH; ALL CLOTHES FROM MANGO; D'LICIOUS NECKLACE. ON CASSIANO: ALL CLOTHES FROM ZARA

PHOTOGRAPHY DIX

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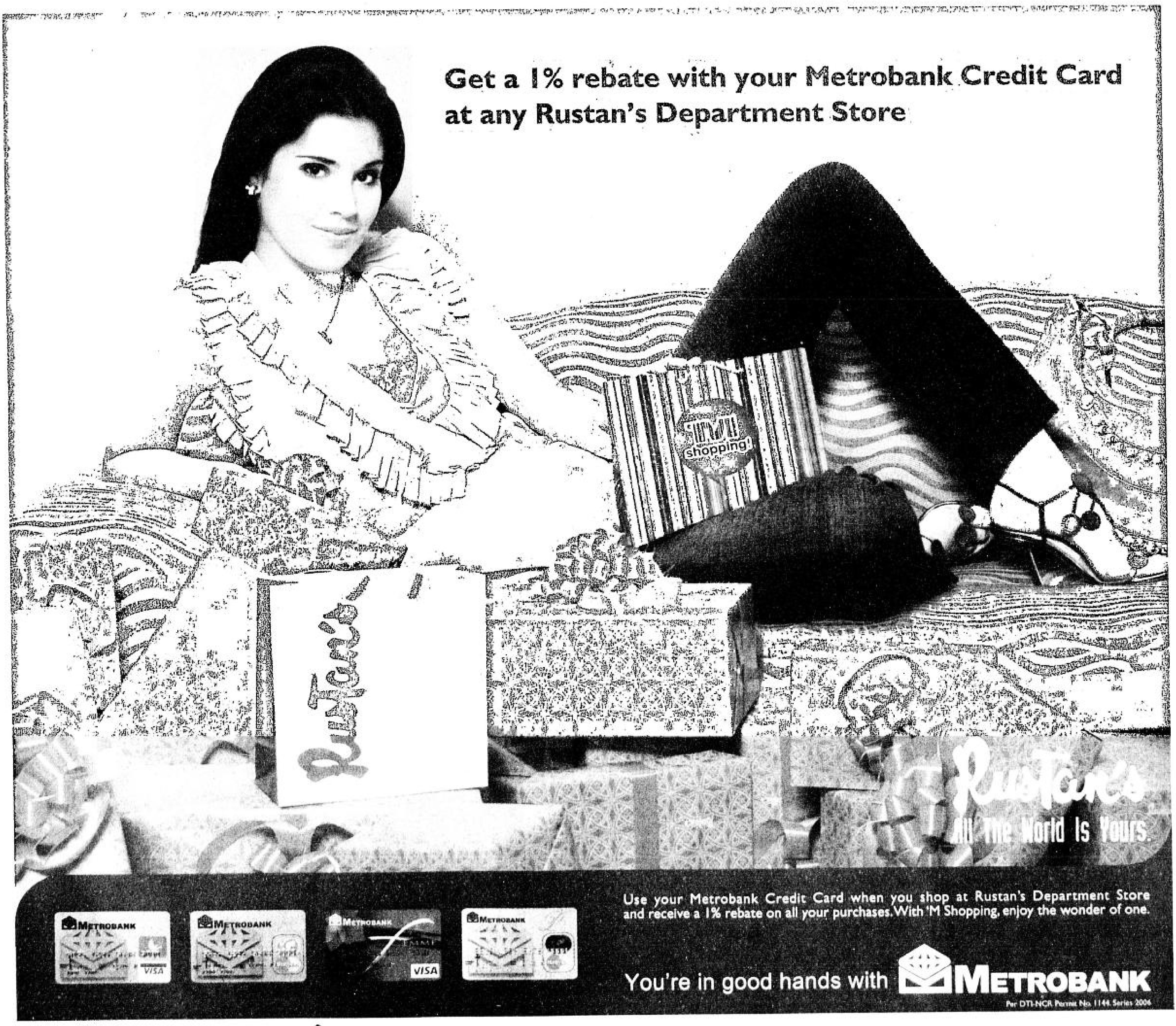
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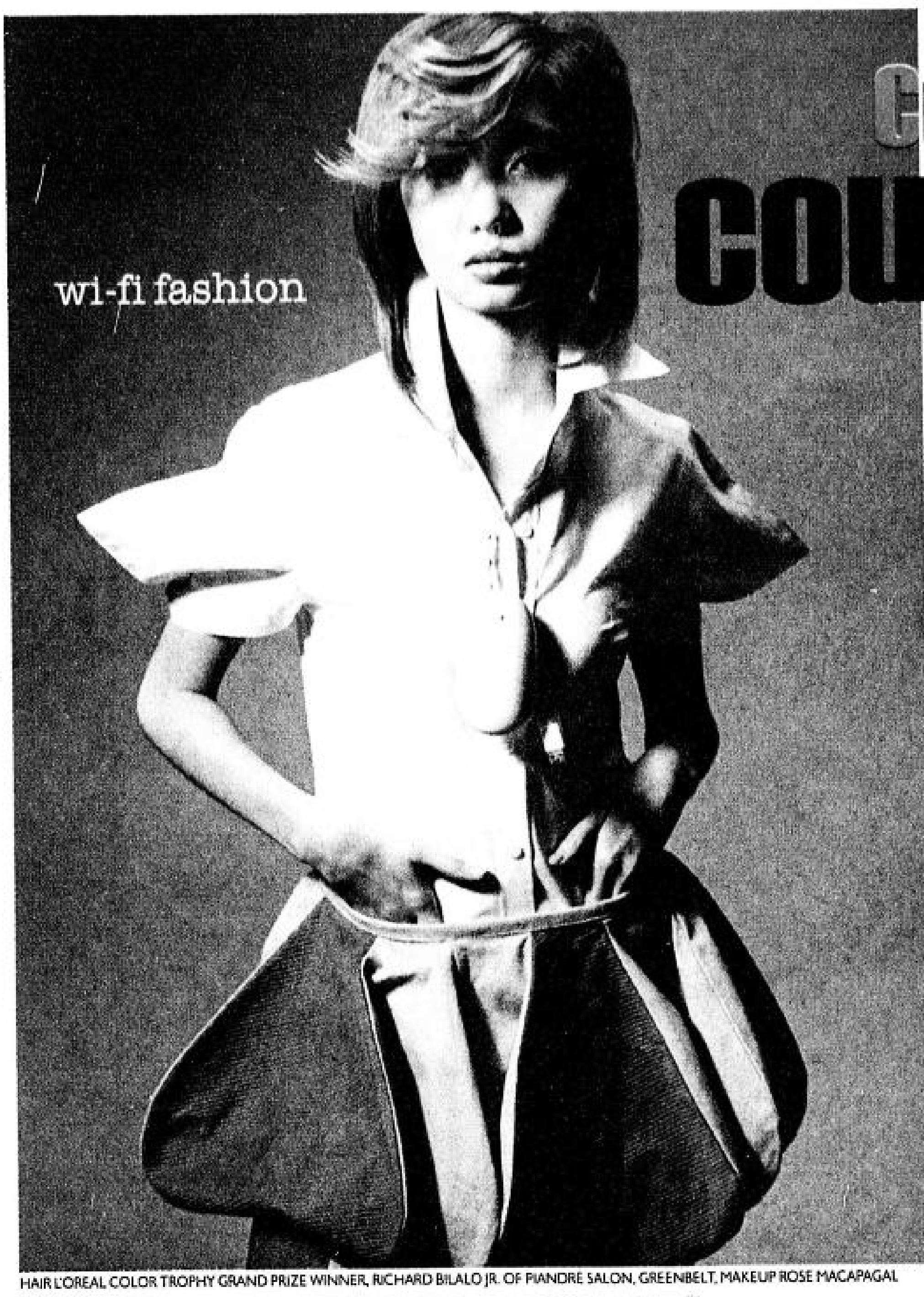
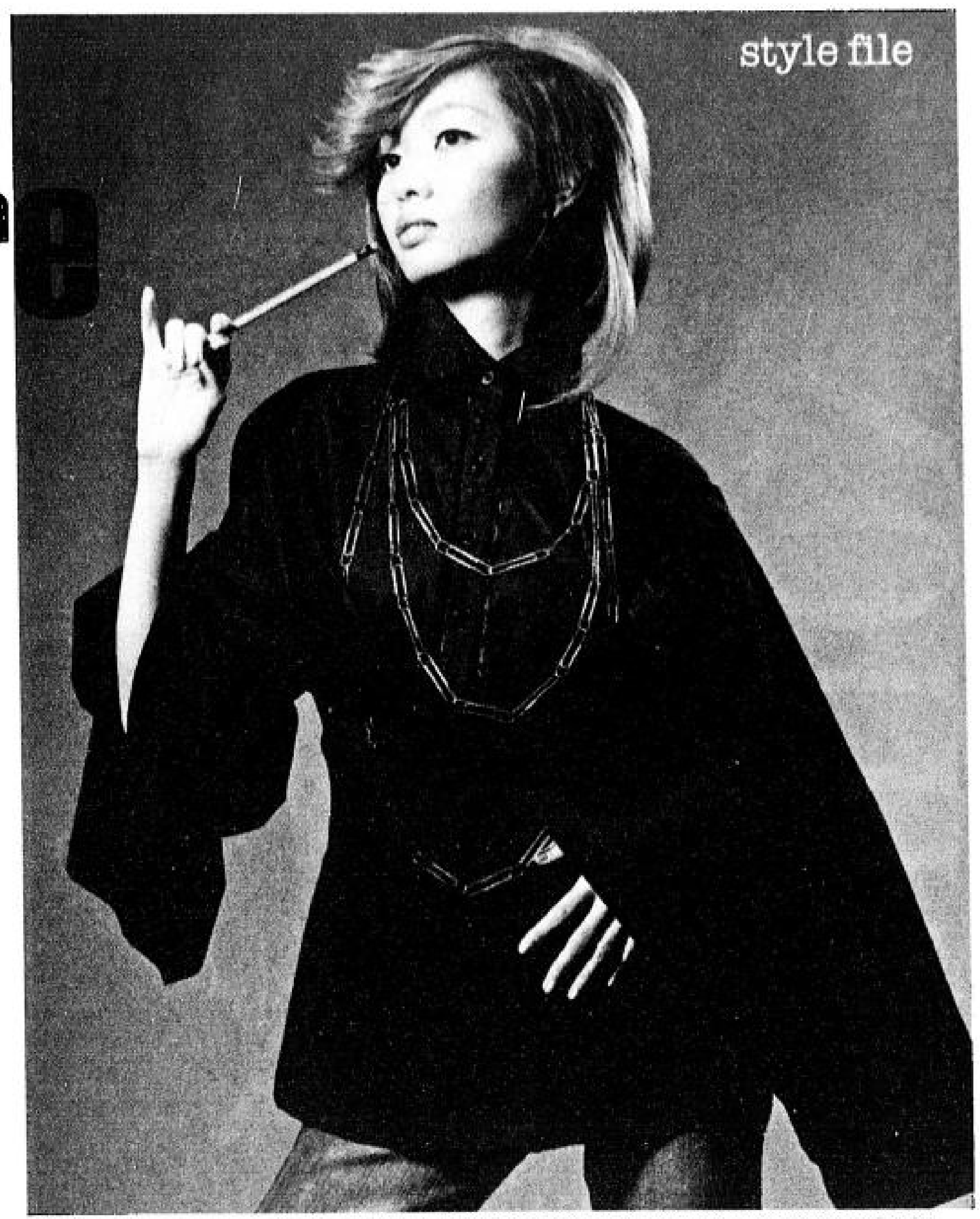


HAIR L'OREAL COLOR TROPHY GRAND PRIZE WINNER, RICHARD BILALO JR. OF PIANDRE SALON, GREENBELT, MAKEUP ROSE MACAPAGAL



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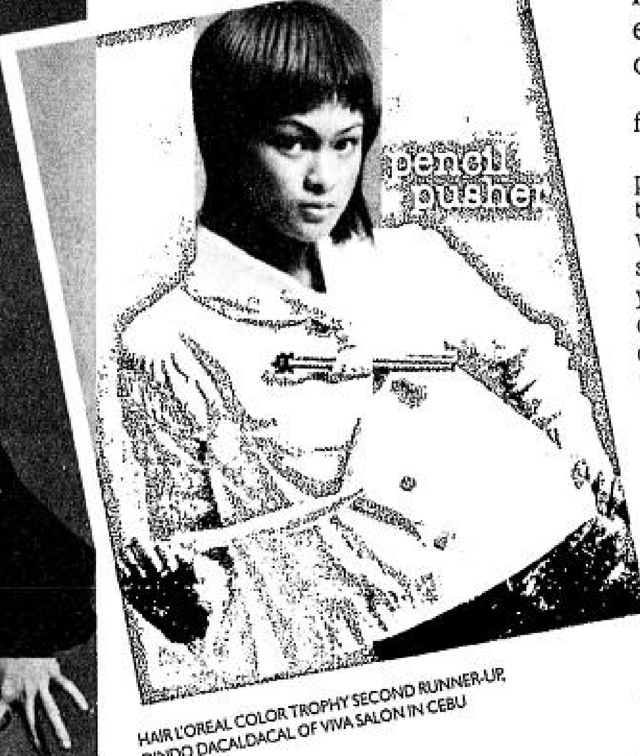


HAIR L'OREAL COLOR TROPHY SECOND RUNNER-UP, DINDO DACALDACAL OF VIVA SALON IN CEBU

PHOTOGRAPHY TOM EPPERSON
STYLING JENNI EPPERSON OF BIG ON STYLE
(BIG_ON_STYLE@YAHOO.COM)
FASHION JAMES REYES (0917-6236183)
MODELS PIE ARCINUE, TRACY LARA AND SISSEL RABAJANTE
SPECIAL THANKS TO ANGELIQUE VILLARAZA

Mabuhay!

Jenni Epperson

HAVE YOU BEEN TO A DOG competition? Breed after breed, dog after dog just running 'round and 'round for others to look over, criticize and weed out.

Oh? Did I just describe your office?

It's hard to stand out from the pinstriped clones, so it's essential to bring a little something to the workplace that will make you shine like the top executive that you are. It's not just about your color-coordinated pie-graphs and bar charts. It's also about bringing the vavavoom to the boardroom.

No matter how many hours of overtime you've pulled, no matter how many PowerPoint presentations you've crunched in that cute little laptop of yours or how many times you've had an afternoon delight with your boss (Ooh, you little devil!), there is no rock-solid assurance that the big guns upstairs are going to give you that corner office with the espresso machine.

So what will make you, Fashionista Poodle, different from all the other doggies in the dog pound? A sense of vavavoom, a touch of fun and a whole lot of *kwela*. And James Reyes' hip corporate couture.

James Reyes (0917-6236183) a Young Designers Guild (YDG) groupie, whips up fun and fabulous bespoke dress shirts for the kind of pretty poodle that you are.

"I enjoy people's wit and character. My creations are for women who are creative and have a sense of humor," he says. "I get inspired by them—pretty much people who are like my friends in advertising."

It is no surprise that James, who has worked many a dog day's afternoon as an associate creative director for an advertising firm, knows that bundy clock bondage is inevitable and the only salvation is the office hottie... and your eye-candy attire.

By revolutionizing the dress shirt, James' pieces will bring much-needed (and should-be-required!) excitement in what is otherwise a sea of boxy pantsuits and double-breasted blazers. He's fused fun fashion with corporate sensibility by mixing traditional custom tailoring with a dash of free-flow movement.

So, my pretty little poodles, add a little bite to your outfits by pairing these contemporary dress shirts with classics like pinstriped pants and pencil skirts, and accessorize them with simple pearls or diamonds.

Looking this chic, you'll definitely be ready when they start handing out the blue ribbon called promotion.

E-mail the author jfashion@inquirer.com.ph

From his closet to your wardrobe

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

The key to this sartorial takeover is simple: While wearing your man's articles of clothing, always allow your femininity to shine through

THEY SAY THAT IT'S A MAN'S world, especially in the workplace. While this may be true, mindsets have been changing fortunately in the past decades. Proof of this is the fact that there are more women leaders nowadays. Gloria Arroyo and Cory Aquino are just a couple of examples of the female of the species leading a predominantly patriarchal society.

Even the workforce is full of hardworking wives and mothers who've managed the shift from bedroom to boardroom. Superwomen the world over now manage to combine both domestic and professional lives, and they do so with flying colors.

That said, allow me to encourage all working women out there not to settle for a mere domination of world affairs. Go ahead and take over your man's closet as well. When dressing for work, raid your better half's fashion booty for men's basics that you can easily incorporate into your wardrobe.

Your man's basic white shirt is perfect for this mission. Match it with leggings, drainpipe pants or a sexy, ultra-narrow pencil skirt. And don't forget to emphasize your womanly curves by using a wide belt.

Accessories also play a major role in this bid for "closet control," so while you're at it, swipe his timepiece, too. His oversized watch will look especially stylish with your feminine garb and dainty wrists. Mix it up with bangles, bracelets and charms for a more fashionable feel.

Another item you can easily make your own is his necktie. Instead of using a belt or sash, grab his tie and use it to cinch your waist. His bright-colored ties or cravats are the perfect contrast to your neutral work wardrobe. For added flash, accessorize with a sparkly brooch.

The key to this sartorial takeover is quite simple: While wearing your man's articles of clothing, always allow your femininity to shine through. So don those spiky stilettos and vibrant red lips and don't let anyone forget that you're all woman, even though they say it's a man's world.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

MEN'S WHITE SHIRT. Cinch an oversize shirt with a wide belt to make it your own.

ON DANIELLE: ZARA MEN'S WHITE LONG SLEEVES, MANGO PANTS, D'LOCIOUS NECKLACE AND BANGLES, GUCCI BELTS. ON CASSIANO: HUGO BOSS PANTS, GUCCI BELT

MEN'S WATCH. Wear chunky chains, charms and bangles with your hubby's watch.

ON DANIELLE: EMPORIO ARMANI MEN'S WATCH AT L TIME STUDIO, MANGO LACE TOP, MAXSTUDIO.COM KNITTED SWEATER, MANGO CHAIN BELT, KENNETH COLE AND FIRMA BRACELETS, FIRMA EARRING (USED ON SLEEVE). ON CASSIANO: ZARA BLACK LONG SLEEVES, BALLY CUFFLINK

PHOTOGRAPHY DIX
STYLING KAT CRUZ OF BIG ON STYLE
(BIG_ON_STYLE@YAHOO.COM)
HAIR AND MAKEUP BENJIE ANGELES
FOR SHU UEMURA AND KIEHL'S
MODELS DANIELLE PIOLI AND CASSIANO GRANDI
OF AHENSIYA MODELO

FASHION SHOUTOUT FASHION SHOUTOUT FASHION SHOUTOUT

Check out the newest vintage stalls in Power Plant Mall's Lifestyle section: Irene's Closet, Pilar, Accessories by Mickey See, Louvre by LZ Punzalan, Verity by Yvonne Quisumbing and Patteu by Patty Eustaquio

Whole health
whole body
whole wheat
Gardenia
HIGH FIBER
Whole Wheat Bun
Gardenia
HIGH FIBER
Whole Wheat Bun
GOOD
Full of nutritious cracked whole wheat goodness
10 Pcs. • Net Wt. 350g
ISO 9001:2000
HACCP CERTIFIED

The difference is in cracked whole wheat.

It's a whole new bun to love! Gardenia Whole Wheat Bun has the wheat-honey taste with full-to-the-bite softness, plus the unique texture of lots of real cracked whole wheat bits included in wholesome wheat flour used in every bun. Enjoy it straight away, or toast it and release a distinct flavor.

And, with each bite, you can benefit from the body-strengthening power of the whole wheat kernel, complete with all the fiber, valuable nutrients, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.

So to help keep the digestive system healthy, aid in the renewal and rejuvenation of body cells, and promote immunity against certain ailments, get into the really soft cracked whole wheat goodness of Gardenia Whole Wheat Bun. It's whole health for the whole body everyday!

Cracked Whole Wheat: The Little Big Fighter

Wheat bread is popular among the diet and figure conscious, and health enthusiasts. More often than not, the value most recognized in wheat bread is fiber. Indeed, wheat bread is an excellent source of insoluble fiber that cleans the digestive system and helps reduce bad cholesterol in the system. But there's more to wheat bread than just fiber, especially if it contains cracked whole wheat like Gardenia Whole Wheat Bun.

Cracked whole wheat means the whole wheat kernel is used; the bran, germ and endosperm. All these are turned into bits that are included in the whole wheat flour used in Gardenia Whole Wheat Bun. To fully appreciate the nutrition in wheat kernels, it's best to know its anatomy:

- **Bran** – The multi-layered outer skin of the kernel. It contains antioxidants, iron, zinc, copper, magnesium, B vitamins, fiber and valuable nutrients.
- **Germ** – The embryo. It contains B vitamins, vitamin E, antioxidants, valuable nutrients and unsaturated fats.
- **Endosperm** – The germ's food supply. It contains starchy carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals.

Nutritious

By using the whole kernel, all the nutrition found in wheat is harnessed to lend the body its full nutritive value. All the fiber, valuable nutrients, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, carbohydrates and unsaturated fats come together not only to keep one's figure trim, but also to have the potential to give support to the body against certain diseases. Small but terrible, as they say. The miniscule cracked whole wheat kernel is truly a big fighter and a helpful ally for one's total well being.

Lesser food intake

Cracked whole wheat may be effective in addressing overweight condition. Because cracked whole wheat helps satisfy hunger for longer periods, it results in lesser food intake.

Helps decrease bad cholesterol

Heart disease can also be kept in check with cracked whole wheat. Together with a low fat diet, it may help decrease bad cholesterol that can cause heart attacks.

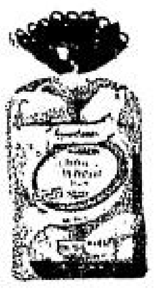
Good for diabetics

Cracked whole wheat, with a low fat diet, may also help improve the body's glucose response and decrease insulin sensitivity that may help diabetics.

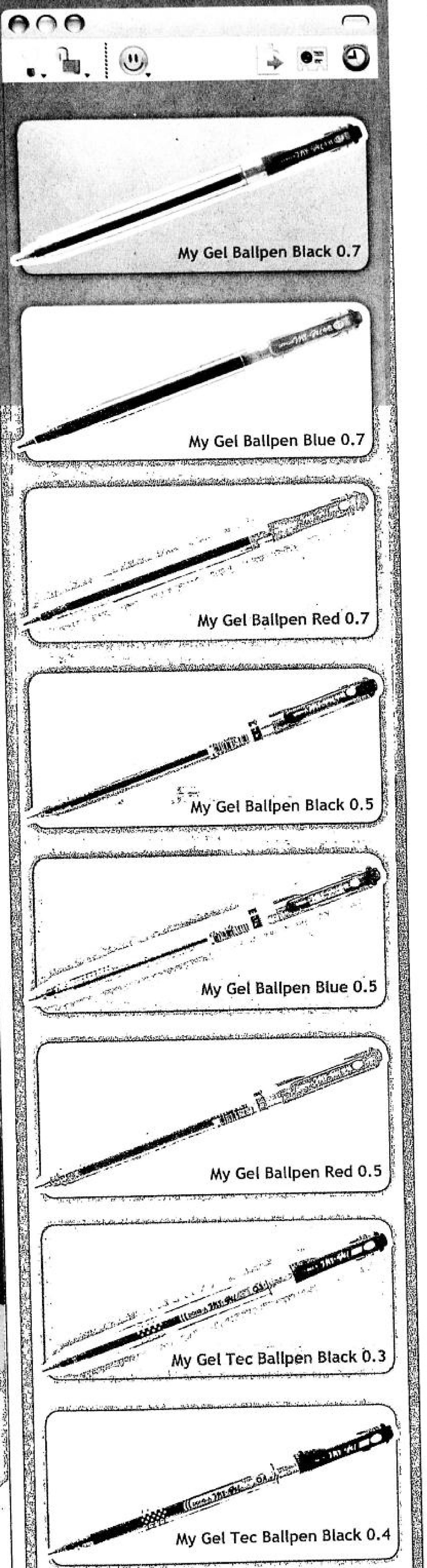
Helps lower risk of some cancers

Because cracked whole wheat is rich in antioxidants, it may help protect cells against oxidative damage which may possibly lower the risk of hormone-related cancers like breast cancer.

Now consider the deliciously soft and nutritious Gardenia Whole Wheat Bun. You can see and taste it because real cracked whole wheat bits are present and dot each bun with all their goodness and health-strengthening properties. So bite into deliciously soft and nutritious cracked whole wheat goodness for whole health for the whole body with Gardenia Whole Wheat Bun.



Load up on these back to school goodies at National Book Store



My Gel Ballpen Black 0.7

My Gel Ballpen Blue 0.7

My Gel Ballpen Red 0.7

My Gel Ballpen Black 0.5

My Gel Ballpen Blue 0.5

My Gel Ballpen Red 0.5

My Gel Tec Ballpen Black 0.3

My Gel Tec Ballpen Black 0.4

DONG-A

BACK TO SCHOOL back to National Book Store

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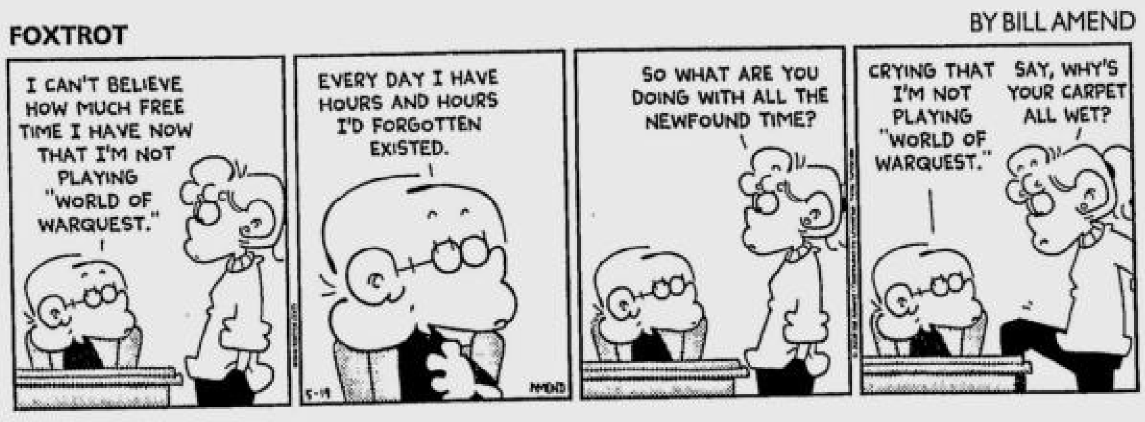
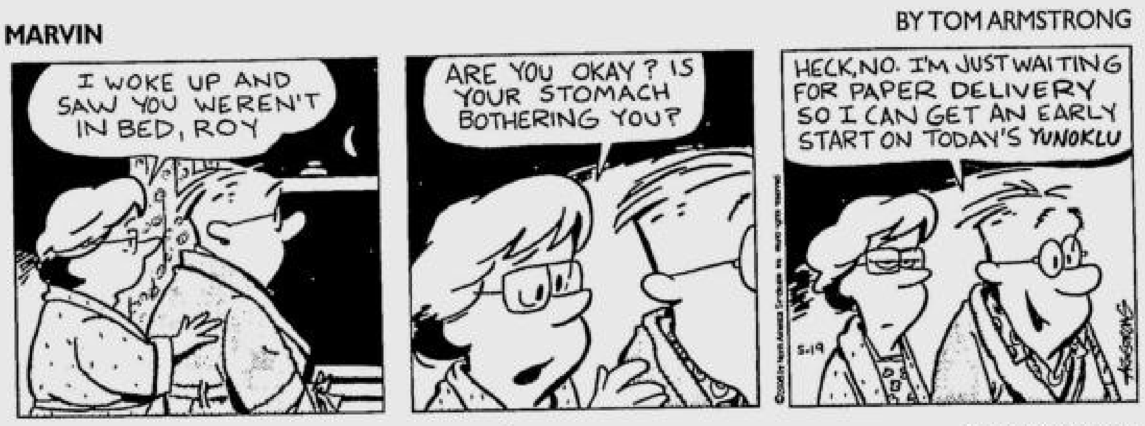
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH FREE TIME I HAVE NOW THAT I'M NOT PLAYING "WORLD OF WARQUEST."
EVERY DAY I HAVE HOURS AND HOURS I'D FORGOTTEN EXISTED.
SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH ALL THE NEWFOUND TIME?
CRYING THAT I'M NOT PLAYING "WORLD OF WARQUEST."
SAY, WHY'S YOUR CARPET ALL WET?
5-19
AMEND

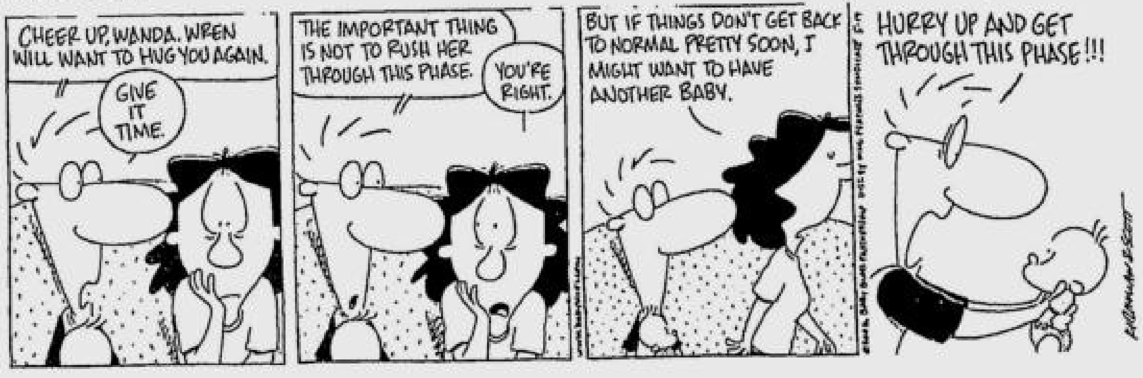
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I WOKE UP AND SAW YOU WEREN'T IN BED, ROY
ARE YOU OKAY? IS YOUR STOMACH BOTHERING YOU?
HECK, NO. I'M JUST WAITING FOR PAPER DELIVERY SO I CAN GET AN EARLY START ON TODAY'S YUNOKLU
5-19

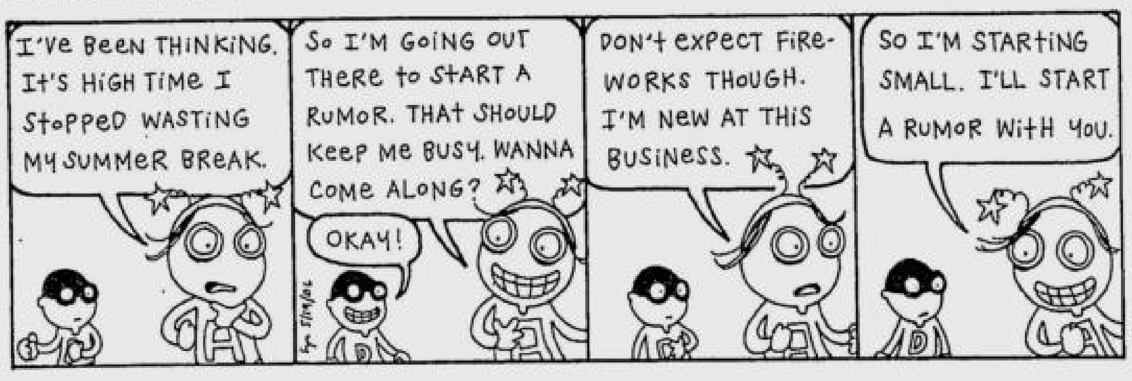
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CHEER UP, WANDA. WREN WILL WANT TO HUG YOU AGAIN.
GIVE IT TIME.
THE IMPORTANT THING IS NOT TO RUSH HER THROUGH THIS PHASE.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
BUT IF THINGS DON'T GET BACK TO NORMAL PRETTY SOON, I MIGHT WANT TO HAVE ANOTHER BABY.
HURRY UP AND GET THROUGH THIS PHASE!!!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'VE BEEN THINKING. IT'S HIGH TIME I STOPPED WASTING MY SUMMER BREAK.
SO I'M GOING OUT THERE TO START A RUMOR. THAT SHOULD KEEP ME BUSY. WANNA COME ALONG?
OKAY!
DON'T EXPECT FIRE-WORKS THOUGH. I'M NEW AT THIS BUSINESS.
SO I'M STARTING SMALL. I'LL START A RUMOR WITH YOU.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have the courage of your own beliefs. You work tirelessly to fight for justice. Many of you are self-taught. (The works of others inspire you.) Ultimately, you will not ignore your spiritual life. You're very bold about exploring the world in your teens and 20s. A big change (perhaps as significant as in 1997) will take place this year.

Birthdate of: Lorraine Hansberry, playwright/activist; Malcolm X, activist; Joey Ramone, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Group discussions intensify in the next few weeks. You will also meet new people, and possibly travel more. Your mind is very alive now. This is not the time to stay at home and relax.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can expect to think about business and commercial affairs more than usual for the next two to three weeks. No doubt you'll be shopping more than usual as well.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today Mercury enters your sign, where it will stay for the next two weeks. This makes your mind jump from one issue to another issue very rapidly. You have a strong desire to communicate with others.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Research into hidden secrets appeals to you now and in the next few weeks. Learn what you can. Your attention to detail will be very good.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Conversations with friends and groups, especially younger people, appeal to you in the next two to three weeks. You feel younger, more alive and pretty hip to the scene!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In the next week or so, conversations with bosses, parents and authority figures are quite significant. Be prepared to speak up. People will listen to you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You don't have to defend your beliefs to others now. No two people are alike. Some prefer bread, some prefer rice, some prefer potatoes.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Fortunately, you have the patience and the mind-set to tackle bills, taxes, debt and red-tape stuff. Accomplish as much as you can in the next two to three weeks.

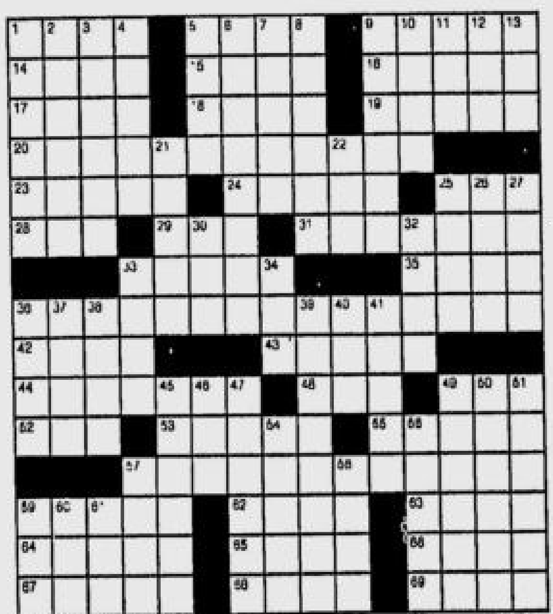
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Today, Mercury moves opposite your sign. This could create the illusion that others are opposing your ideas. (But are you opposing theirs?)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You'll find it easy to do routine, detailed work in the next few weeks. Take advantage of this. Accomplish as much as you can.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Grab every opportunity to play games, read mysteries and explore entertaining escapes in the next few weeks. You feel like a kid again! (That means you feel like one—not like having one.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Family discussions are important in the next few weeks. You have something to say. This same time period is an excellent time to tackle home repairs.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA

5/19/06

ACROSS

1 At any time
5 Questions
9 Set to go
14 Eternal City
15 Give a bias to
16 Clarinetist Shaw
17 Wander about
18 Trigonometric function
19 Fools
20 Expectation from an amulet?
23 Hangman's knot
24 Spicy condiment
25 Hiatus
28 "Le coq ___"
29 Pair
31 "Amadeus" role
33 Tel Aviv-___
35 Reservoir filler
36 Flack who is terse?
42 Scallion's relative
43 Short putt
44 Something for nothing
48 Blue
49 Half of MXII
52 Pismire
53 To date
56 MacDonald's refrain
57 Stick, already!
59 ___ for the ride
62 Non-negotiable
63 Actress Kedrova
64 Pooh's creator
65 Pac-10 team
66 Actress Moran
67 Old World snake
68 Produces eggs
69 Miller play, "All My ___"

DOWN

1 To-do list item
2 Caribbean cult
3 Key of Boccherini's string quartet
4 Romulus' twin
5 Exec.'s aide
6 Takes first cut
7 Ethiopia's neighbor
8 Expands
9 Scamp
10 Composer Satie
11 24-hr. cash source
12 Tango move
13 You bet!
21 Auto style
22 U.N. host
25 Material
26 Very dry
27 Bowling targets
30 Craft of sci-fi
32 Something to pump?
33 Boxer LaMotta
34 Towards the rear
36 ___ Romeo (Italian car)
37 Actor Bruce
38 Bump into
39 Coming out of the sunrise
40 New Deal program
41 Increase girth
45 Wisconsin mascot
46 Sorta
47 Real looker
49 1980 Oscar-winning actor
50 One of the strings
51 Hawkeyes
54 Writer Jong
55 Wastes time
57 Ms. Bancroft
58 Latin 101 conjugation
59 GP group
60 Pot cover
61 Run to seed

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

B	A	L	I	■	D	O	N	U	T	■	A	C	E	S
O	L	I	N	■	I	V	A	N	I	■	L	A	V	A
C	O	N	S	C	I	E	N	C	E	■	U	S	E	D
A	U	D	I	O	■	R	O	O	D	■	M	E	R	E
■	■	■	G	R	E	■	■	R	Y	A	N	■	■	■
I	S	W	H	A	T	M	A	K	E	S	A	B	O	Y
B	A	R	T	■	R	E	L	■	■	P	E	A	B	O
E	Y	E	■	T	E	L	L	H	I	S	■	R	E	Y
A	N	S	E	R	■	■	E	E	C	■	S	T	L	O
M	O	T	H	E	R	B	E	F	O	R	E	H	I	S
■	■	■	R	E	A	R	■	■	N	O	M	■	■	■
O	P	A	L	■	N	U	T	S	■	A	I	S	L	E
M	A	X	I	■	S	I	S	T	E	R	D	O	E	S
E	P	I	C	■	O	S	K	A	R	■	R	Y	E	S
N	A	S	H	■	M	E	S	T	A	■	Y	A	R	E

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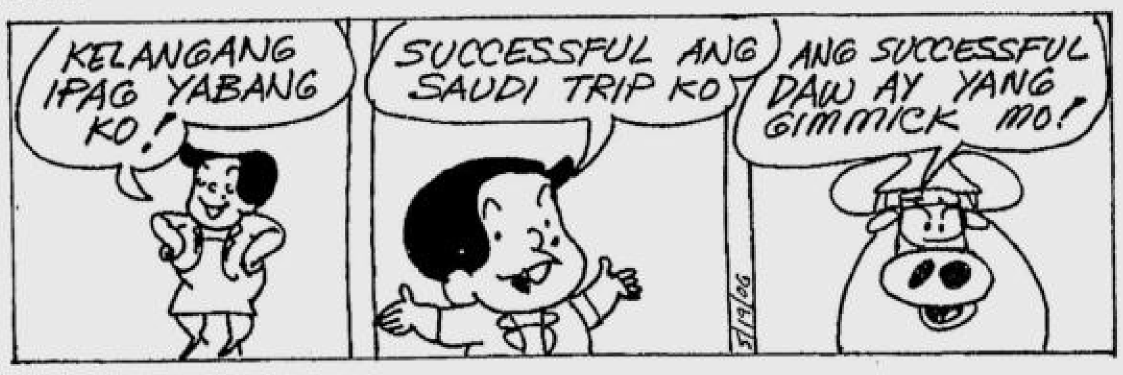
5/18/06

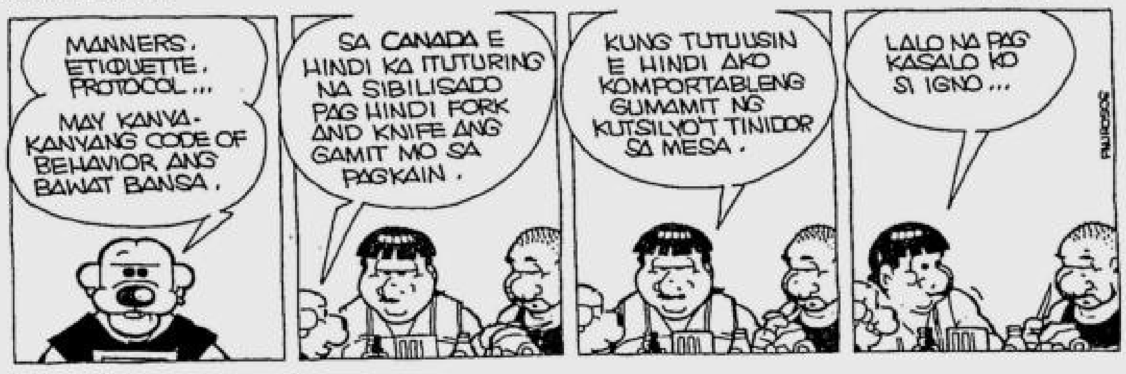
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KELANGANG IPAG YABANG KO!
SUCCESSFUL ANG SAUDI TRIP KO
ANG SUCCESSFUL DAW AY YANG GIMMICK MO!
5/19/06

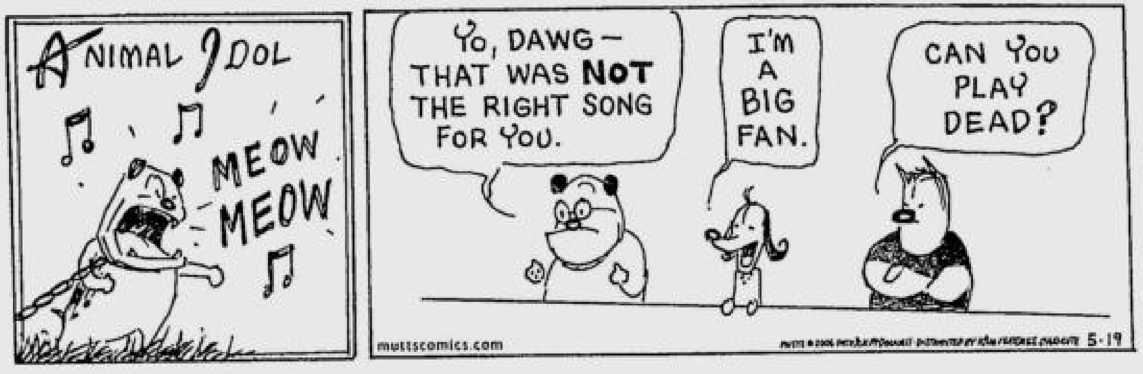
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MANNERS, ETIQUETTE, PROTOCOL... MAY KANYA-KANYANG CODE OF BEHAVIOR ANG BAWAT BANSA.
SA CANADA E HINDI KA ITUTURING NA SIBILISADO PAG HINDI FORK AND KNIFE ANG GAMIT MO SA PAGKAIN.
KUNG TUTUUSIN E HINDI AKO KOMPORTABLENG GUMAMIT NG KUTSILYO'T TINIDOR SA MESA.
LALO NA PAG KASALO KO SI IGNO...

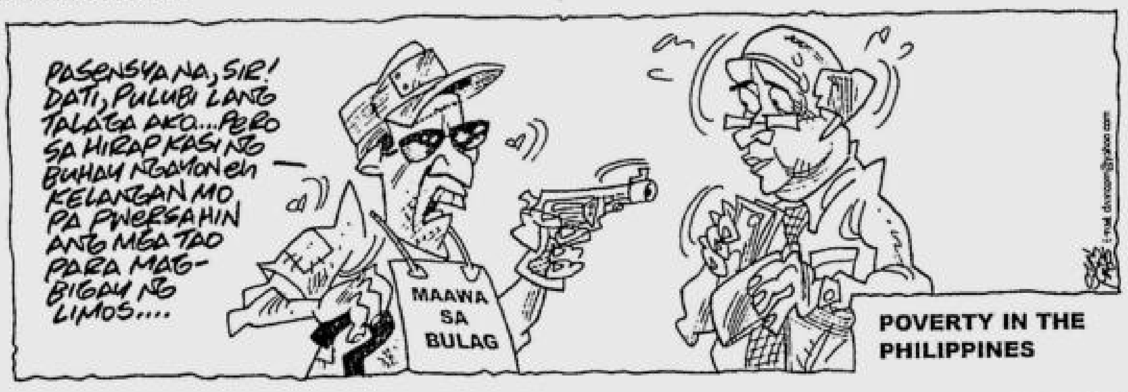
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ANIMAL IDOL
MEOW MEOW
YO, DAWG— THAT WAS NOT THE RIGHT SONG FOR YOU.
I'M A BIG FAN.
CAN YOU PLAY DEAD?
muttscomics.com
5-19

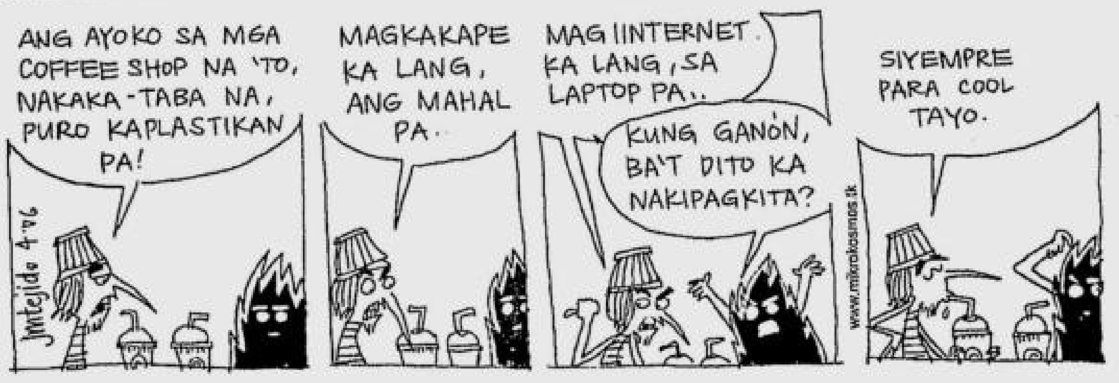
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


PASENSYA NA, SIR! DATI, PULUBI LANG TALAGA AKO... PERO SA HIRAP KASI NG BUHAY NGAYON EH KELANGAN MO PA PWERSAHIN ANG MGA TAO PARA MAG-BIGAY NG LIMOS....
MAAWA SA BULAG
POVERTY IN THE PHILIPPINES

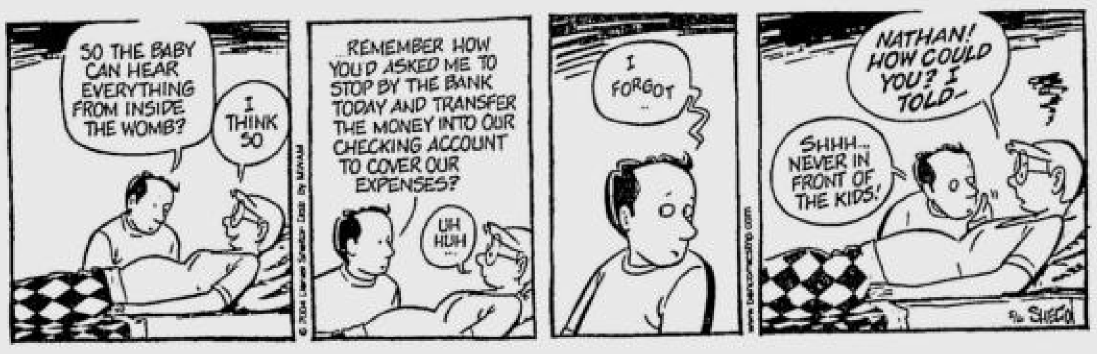
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG AYOKO SA MGA COFFEE SHOP NA 'TO, NAKAKA-TABA NA, PURO KAPLASTIKAN PA!
MAGKAKAPE KA LANG, ANG MAHAL PA.
MAG IINTERNET KA LANG, SA LAPTOP PA..
KUNG GANON, BA'T DITO KA NAKIPAGKITA?
SIYEMPRE PARA COOL TAYO.
Jmtejido 4-06
www.mikrokosmos.tk

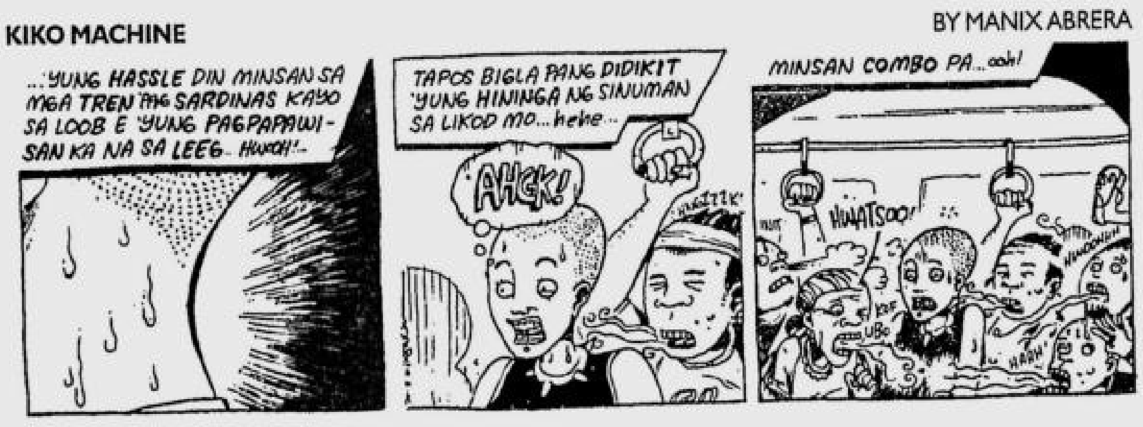
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO THE BABY CAN HEAR EVERYTHING FROM INSIDE THE WOMB?
I THINK SO
...REMEMBER HOW YOU'D ASKED ME TO STOP BY THE BANK TODAY AND TRANSFER THE MONEY INTO OUR CHECKING ACCOUNT TO COVER OUR EXPENSES?
UH HUH
I FORGOT
NATHAN! HOW COULD YOU? I TOLD-
SHHH... NEVER IN FRONT OF THE KIDS!

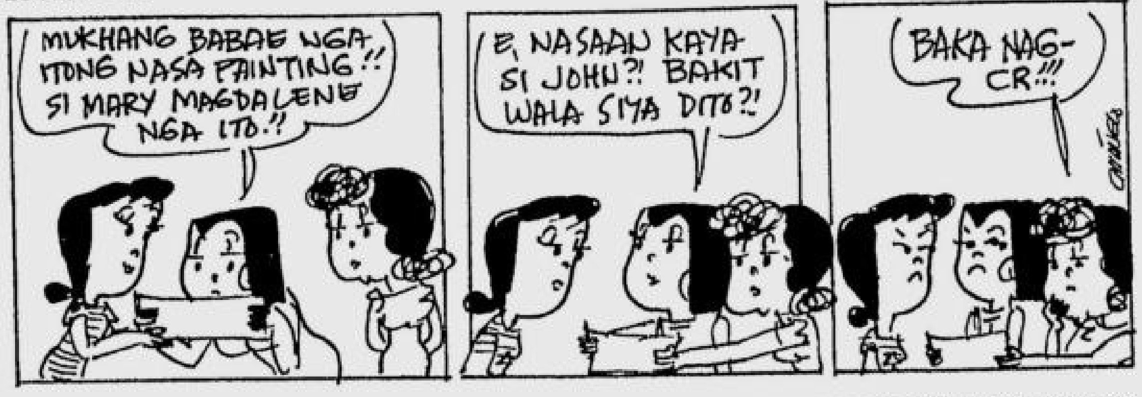
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


...'YUNG HASSLE DIN MINSAN SA MGA TREN PAG SARDINAS KAYO SA LOOB E 'YUNG PAGPAPAWI-SAN KA NA SA LEEG.. HWOH!..
TAPOS BIGLA PANG DIDIKIT 'YUNG HININGA NG SINUMAN SA LIKOD MO... hehe...
AHCK!
MINSAN COMBO PA... ooh!
HWATSOO!

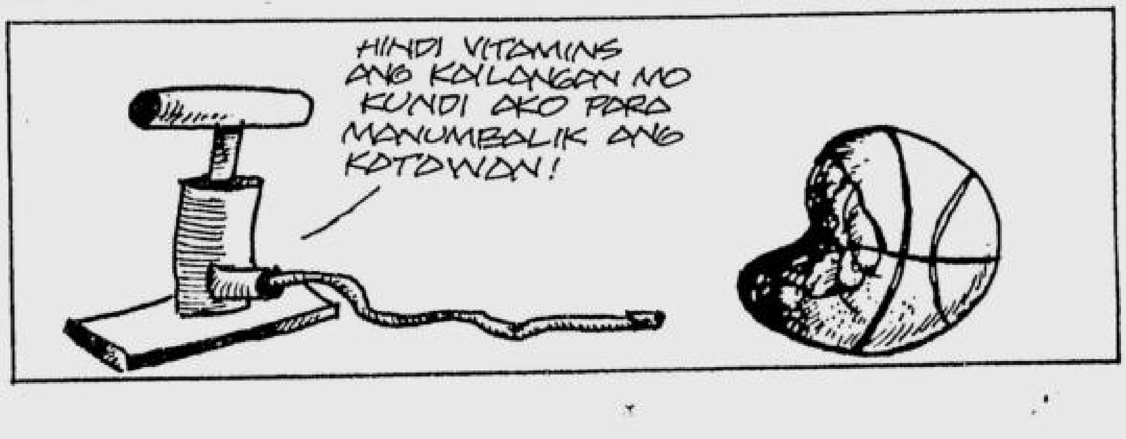
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

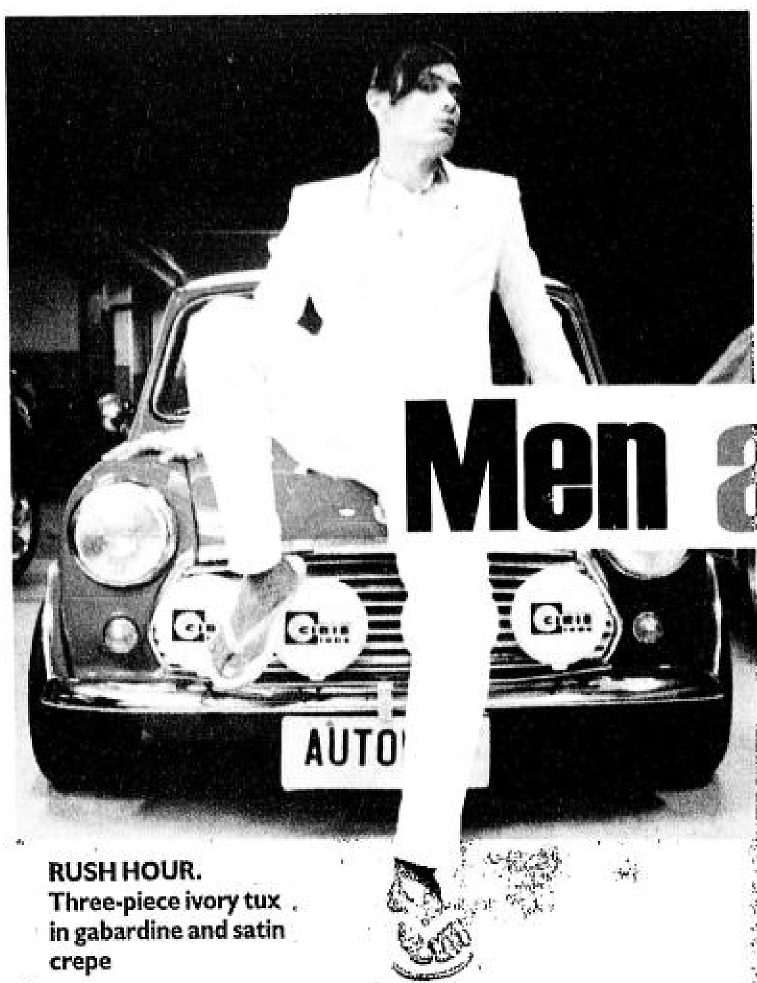

MUKHANG BABAE NGA ITONG NASA PAINTING!! SI MARY MAGDALENE NGA ITO.?!
E, NASAAN KAYA SI JOHN?! BAKIT WALA SIYA DITO?!
BAKA NAG-CR!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HINDI VITAMINS ANG KAILANGAN MO KUNDI AKO PARA MANUMBALIK ANG KATAWAN!

Men at work



RUSH HOUR. Three-piece ivory tux in gabardine and satin crepe

TROUBLESHOOTERS. On Albert: Gray double-breasted coat over white high-collar tuxedo shirt and light gray pinstriped pants. On Peter: Blue-and-gray checkered overcoat with gartered waist and gray pinstriped pants

By Alex Y. Vergara

UNLIKE WOMEN, MOST men don't make an effort to regularly update their wardrobes. Since guys aren't as vulnerable as women to shifting trends in fashion, many shop for clothes (prodded in no small way by their partners) or visit their tailors only when the need arises. Well and good.

But such a perfunctory approach to fashion shouldn't be an excuse for you to neglect your closets. Only by keeping tabs of what you have can you make wise shopping decisions in the future, says fashion designer Joey Samson.

"It's rare to see a guy go through his clothes regularly," he says. "They should. It's the only way to find out what you have and what you don't have, what you don't use and what you should use, what you should keep and what you should discard."

Such information will also come in handy if and when you decide to update or beef up your current wardrobe. Even if you're not a slave to trends, it's important to know by heart the contents of your cabinet before buying something major, like a bespoke suit or designer jacket.

Will the suit work with your current pieces—from shoes to belts, shirts to ties? If not, are you willing to shell out extra cash for new stuff aimed at complementing that suit? Does the jacket look a lot like an old one you still use? Would it be better to postpone the purchase or go for a different style, color and make?

"Such knowledge will not only save you money," says Samson. "It will also leave you with an uncluttered wardrobe and save you from going on frequent trips to the mall or your tailor."

You can always vary the look of a well-made suit by wearing and combining it with a different shirt, tie, belt, shoes and even socks

PHOTOGRAPHY
STEVE TIRONA
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FASHION ASSISTANCE
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ALBERT ADRALES
PETER NORRDELL
CALCARRIE'S
SHOES TENORIO MANILA
LOCATION AUTOMAX SERVICE,
3637 BAUTISTA ST.,
BRGY. PALANAN, MAKATI CITY.
(834-6902)
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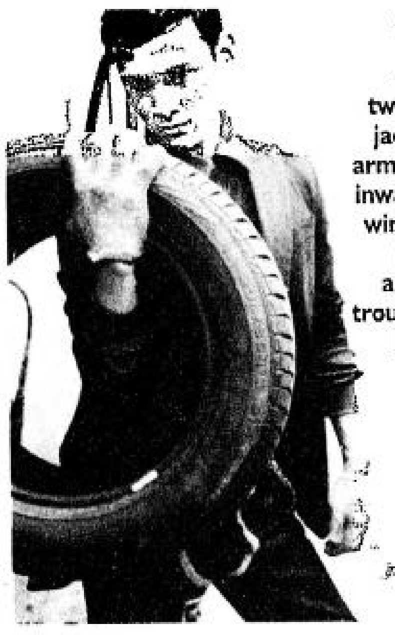
TO JONAS SILVA SR.



AT-TIRE. Black satinized two-button jacket with armholes cut inwards over wine dotted knit shirt and denim trousers with long-john details

Apart from taking a mental note of your sartorial possessions, it's important that you do a cursory self-examination of such basics as your personality, lifestyle and career (nothing heavy, though, that might lead you to question your faith or sexuality).

"I always ask clients, especially first-timers, about their careers and lifestyles," says Samson. "I also ask them whether or not they're familiar with my work, as I need to know if their sense of style is more suited to another designer."

Other primary considerations, of course, are budget and the occasion for which you intend to wear the ensemble. Being faddish has its rewards, but it will certainly cost you more. Unlike safe and classic cuts, edgy details are more likely to make your key pieces look identifiable and dated sometimes even before the new season rolls in.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE. On Albert: Olive jacket with front strap closure detail, yellow pinstriped shirt and pale blue pants. On Peter: beige satinized twill jacket and pants with dark-aqua shirt and olive suede tie

Safe choices

If you opt for classic pieces, however, you need not repeat yourself and sacrifice style. You can always vary the look of a well-made suit by wearing and combining it with a different shirt, tie, belt, shoes and even socks.

"Apart from paying attention to your staples," says Samson, "you should also be particular about the suit's fit, proportion, construction and materials. Such attributes can make or break a look."

A white jacket—an unusual choice to wear to the office, to begin with—made of flimsy material, for instance, can leave its wearer looking like a doctor or, worse, an X-ray technician. The material should be heavy enough to impart the jacket with the right "fall." Off-white or bone is a safer choice for the office, compared to stark white.

"When it doubt, go for classic pieces," he says. "You should also dress for comfort and the prevailing weather."

Being classic doesn't necessarily mean being boring. Certainly not in the hands of a designer like Samson, who can transform even the most reticent client into a snappy dresser sometimes without him even knowing it.

Thanks to his fertile imagination and adept tailoring skills, Samson is able to infuse subtle details on the suit as well as rework established ways of cutting and manipulating fabrics. The results run the gamut from semi-circular panels to inverted seams, from slanted front pockets to atypical armholes.

"Most of my male clients hardly notice such unusual features," says Samson with a wink. "It's usually their wives and girlfriends who notice them. They come to me and whisper in hushed tones how they love this or that detail."

Their men, of course, look all the better because of such subtle details.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Case in point

Big on function, bigger on style - power totes for the stylish working woman

By Cheche V. Moral

WHITE LADY. Extra-large handbag with grommets by Aerosoles at Rustan's Department Store; printed silk scarf by Louis Vuitton

DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER. Canvas logo bag with leather strap by Bally

SIZE MATTERS, SEASON trend reports say. They mean women's purses, of course—large, capacious satchels that can fit a Powerbook, a Thermos of caffeine and, well, maybe a few loose change, a bottle of formula and a small child.

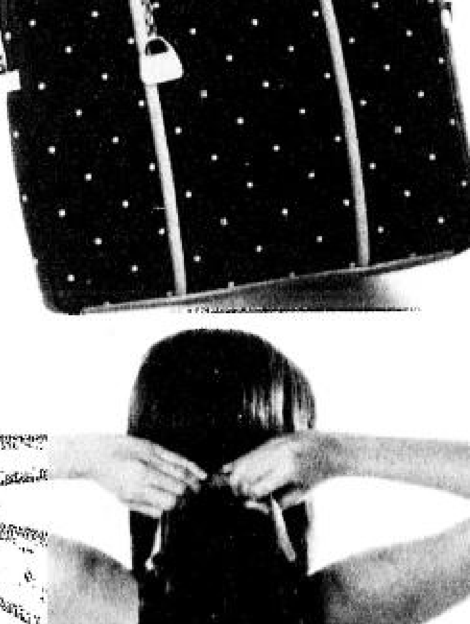
Ask any busy multitasking woman and she'll tell you this is possibly the most practical trend that has come to fore of late. Finally, something that can fit her entire daily hectic life into!

Big, however, isn't the only consideration when picking a bag that goes to work *with* you and works *for* you.

Take into account your work environment—is it creative or thoroughly staid and professional? A metallic, slouchy bag is okay for someone who works, say, in advertising, but may be deemed too casual for a bank executive, so opt for something more structured.

"Structured" doesn't, however, mean boring. They now come in a variety of shapes that mimic more casual styles. Even styles in the more traditional blacks and browns come in woven or textured materials, with golden metal hardware and other interesting details—check out the handles, shoulder straps or flaps. An unexpected color, of course, is the perfect foil to a dark suit.

Remember that professional doesn't have to mean drab. A bright, colored scarf tied around the handle or some nice little charms dangling on the side are guaranteed to add punch to the most sober of black bags.



CASE THE JOINT. Polka-dot laptop bag with leather trim by Kate Spade; yellow leather key chain by Kate Spade

BUCKLE UP. Camel leather tote by Salvatore Ferragamo; butterfly key chain by Salvatore Ferragamo

PHOTOGRAPHY FRANK HOEFSMIT
STYLING MAUREEN DISINI OF BIG ON STYLE
(BIG_ON_STYLE@YAHOO.COM)
HAIR AND MAKEUP JIGS MAYUGA OF L'OREAL PARIS
MODEL TERESA HERRERA OF CALCARRIE'S

Logos are also something to watch out for. Again, the screaming kind has no place in a formal work atmosphere. What if it's a Louis Vuitton, you ask? Well, insolent woman, the Monogram Canvas, maybe, but save the Denim for the weekend or a night in the town. Besides, you don't want your bosses to think they're paying you too much by going around flaunting big-name logos in the office. (Uh-oh.)

Your objective here is to find one that's big on function. But never, ever, scrimp on style. Take, for instance, your laptop bag. If it's the generic black kind with a thick shoulder strap, emblazoned on the front with a logo other than your company's or your laptop's (read: a freebie scored from somewhere), junk it now! Leave those to the boys.

The market is increasingly recognizing the demand for totes that can fit women's tech stuff—and vanity kit at the same time. If you look hard enough, you will find briefcases and laptop bags in a surfeit of colors and materials, and styles that have built-in padded sleeves for a laptop; compartments for a cell phone, a Blackberry, battery chargers, an iPod; a binder of documents, magazines and your makeup.

Best of all, they're so pretty they don't look like laptop bags at all (or what you used to think they are, at least).

It's a real challenge, this quest for the perfect laptop case that suits the chic working woman that you are. If you do find one, chances are the price tag can make quite a dent on your paycheck. Of course, considering what you paid for that Mac Book Pro, it's only wise to invest in a nice case to lug it around in.

We scoured the Net for some styles you can choose from (www.markaonline.com, www.myrebe.com, www.getbirdinhand.com, www.kolobags.com, www.abbinewyork.com). Oh, did we mention some local bag makers offer custom services? (Wink. Wink.)

Now get down on it and we'll get off your case!

Email the author at cmoral@inquirer.com.ph

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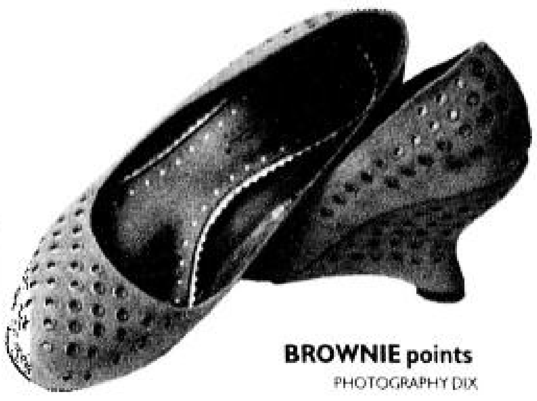
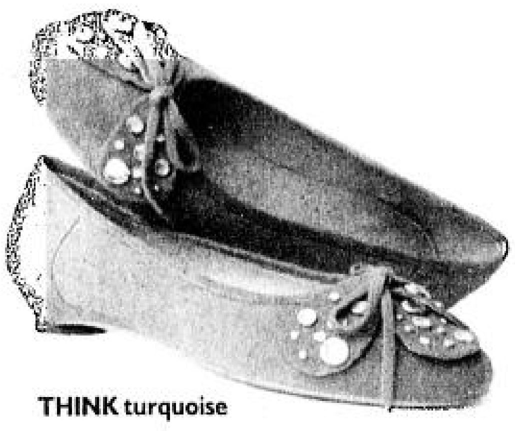


BROWNIE points

PHOTOGRAPHY DIX



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Look good, be good

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

We spend more time at work than at home or out partying, so proper grooming does go a long way

I'M IN AN INTERNET CAFÉ AT 7 a.m., writing the article I have to e-mail in a few hours so I could beat my deadline.

Earlier, I literally rolled out of bed, looked for sweats and didn't have much luck. I ended up mismatching, but figured no one knew me here anyway so it should be okay.

At the moment, I am across the Soho hotel my husband and I are staying in and I am freezing. I am a bit spaced out and just checking out some people coming in to get their morning caffeine fix.

If there is one thing that actually says how important or successful a person is in his or her line of work, it would be how presentable he or she is.

So as I am trying to concentrate on the story I'm writing and checking out people at the same time, I realize how important good grooming is in the work place. Or, actually, in any place, since I'm noticing that people entering just seem to glance at me. Now I know how much of a homeless person I look.

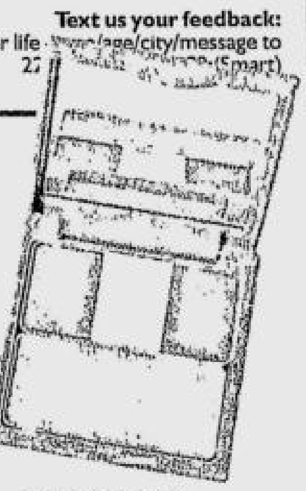
I believe if you are happy in your job, you are compelled to dress better. Work can be the best place for you when you enjoy what you are doing and love the people you work with. At the very least, the more dressed and well groomed you are, the more people will take you seriously and the more viable you become for that promotion.

We spend more time at work than at home or out partying, so good grooming does go a long way. It is easy and takes less than 10 minutes.

Tie your hair if you don't have time to blow-dry it. If you've not had enough sleep, use a concealer. Brush on some blush and swipe on your favorite shade of lippie.

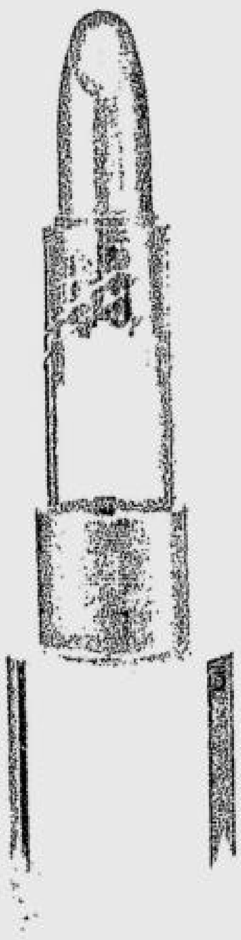
You don't always have to put eye shadow. Sometimes curling your lashes and adding mascara are enough. Make sure your nails are clean and then spray on a lovely scent. Celebrate yourself and make sure you look good. You want to be presentable, and people are drawn to good-looking people, anyway—which is actually anybody and everybody who is well-kept.

That can surely be you. I should know. I honestly wish I took a few more extra minutes to look for my matching jump suit, tie my hair and put on some blush and lipstick. As it is, even if I'm in a café where no one knows me, I feel unworthy of writing this article. Though I feel I should, too, since at the moment I am reporting from the other end of the spectrum, and I'm not enjoying it.



SHU Uemura's Amber and Nature makeup palette

SHU Uemura Amber and Nature Collection's Liquid Shimmer Eyeliner in brown



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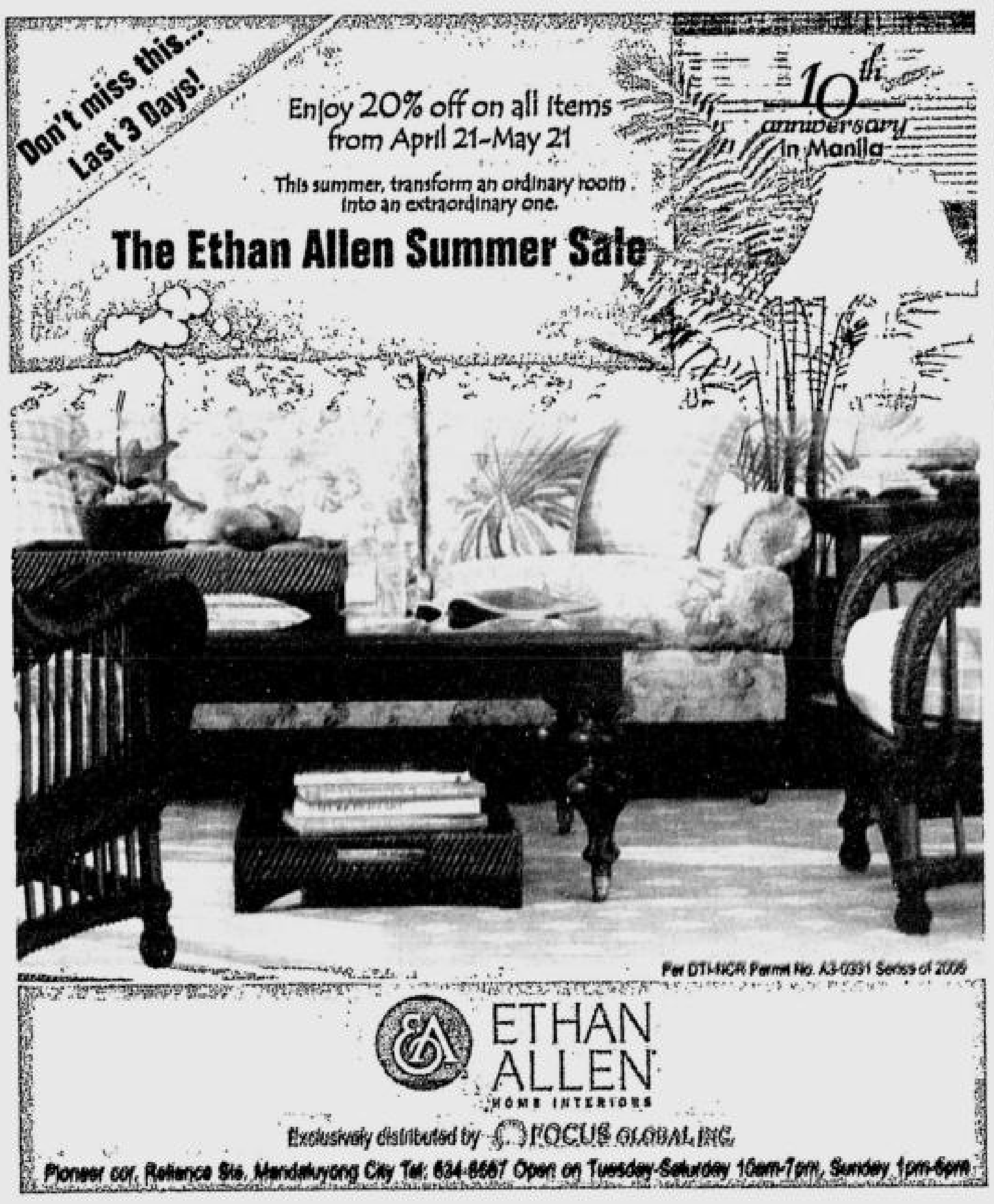

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Kinny Salas

MOST ASIAN WOMEN want fair skin and their reason may be frowned upon as racism, but they are right: Fair skin will keep them looking young long-term.

Whitening or brightening products actually reverses skin damage and boosts skin immunities, making skin healthy and strong. When you think about it, our skin achieved its best condition when we were babies. It was even-toned all over; the lighter it was, the higher the moisture. It was also stronger then, as our scratches healed fast.

Did you notice that when we were children, when we went to the beach, our tan faded really fast compared with the latter years? That was because of the skin's ability to heal itself due to a very efficient immune system.

The whitening products sold over the counter aim to get back your even-toned baby skin, making it perhaps a little lighter. Their main purpose is to eliminate damage and discoloration like freckles, age spots and post-pimple dark or red marks to leave your skin clear and even.

For huge discoloration caused by menopause or pregnancy, I would suggest strong products under a doctor's supervision such as the Obagi Nu Derm program. It really does work the fastest and yields dramatic results.

But the program may yield disastrous results when you are lax about it, hence the doctor's supervision. It's the only one I know that actually erases all the stubborn freckles.

Very noticeable results

Brightening brands have intensified their formulas so that very noticeable results are seen in a week or less. The fastest to fade are of course pimple marks, and the longest to disappear are age spots.

The basic step is, of course, cleanser, toner, essence/serum (the most crucial product) and day cream with SPF and whitening night cream.

The following brands take into account the skin type; they have a specialized toner and even cleanser:

Lancôme Blanc Expert Neurowhite, Estée Lauder Cyberwhite, Shu Uemura White Recovery Ex (made even more potent), and Clinique Dermawhite, which has the most extensive and, shall I say, complicated steps that will thrill the whitening fanatic!

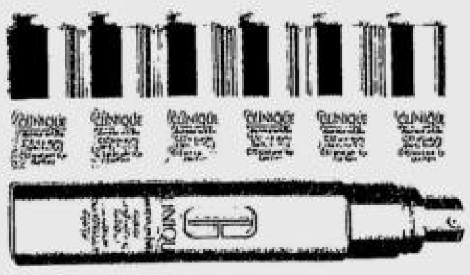
I still use my Pure Focus cleanser and toner to mop up my oily face because the Lancôme Toning Lotion 1 does not do it for me.

Lancôme, Estée and Shu have made their essences more potent. I see results in overall skin lightening just a day after using them.

People even remark that my skin has become very white. The product has also broken up pigmentation on my menopausal test subjects aged 50 and above!

Clinique has added many enhancements in its line. I like the C10 anti-aging clarity formula and the gel mask with activator spray that leaves skin feeling like satin and looking like porcelain.

On whitening boosters for evening use, there are now treatments that are applied straight for a period to exfoliate and boost the brightening action to achieve glowing, even skin that is foundation-free.



CLINIQUE
derma white
CLINIQUE
derma white

For damaged skin

Those with sun-damaged and weakened skin will see the results fastest. My favorites: 1) Clarins White Plus skin renew and whitening concentrate. It is applied every night after cleansing and toning for three weeks straight, to be used alone and with no other treatment except eye cream. It is intended to prep up the skin for the changes of season every three months. In the Philippines, every six months should be sufficient to boost the skin as we do not have radical changes in climate. I tested this on my neck ; I dare say my neck is even slightly lighter in shade.

2) Guerlain Perfect white C Ultra Concentrated whitening treatment for evenings is responsible for my lighter-colored nape as well. I notice that I neglect my shoulders, arms and nape when it comes to sun protection. Applying this resulted in my nape not only getting lighter but having a better texture than the skin on my face. For the daytime, I go crazy over the SPF 50++ sunblock that is sweat- and water-resistant. It soothes any inflammation, has a matte finish and blurs the skin's minor imperfections. Its peel-off spot corrector is also a godsend since it fades marks dramatically.

3) Elizabeth Arden's Sheer White Pure Intensive Capsules (P3,450) and Serum (P4,200) are the same thing but in different delivery systems. I use it on my eye area and I notice a firming and a reduction in inflammation.

I have more products in the brightening arena so do not expect this to be the last feature. The rest are currently being tested. They come in different price ranges for everyone's budget. Stay tuned!

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Spa opens branch in Ortigas

BODY TUNE THE TRADITIONAL Thai Massage, the original spa-in-a-mall, has opened a branch at the SM Megamall.

Body Tune offers at the new branch the Xiamen foot massage, a 90-minute treatment that comes with either back- or full-body massage.

The Xiamen foot massage reportedly helps improve blood circulation; relieves rheumatism, athlete's foot, influenza and similar ailments; improves metabolism; relieves insomnia and fatigue; strengthens body organs; relieves pain caused by diabetes, headaches, gastritis, neurasthenia, high blood pressure, stiff neck, leg cramps, back pains; and relieves stress.

The Xiamen foot massage comes with an herbal foot soak and a foot scrub.

Also being offered at the Body Tune SM Megamall branch is the Balinese massage, an oil-based treatment from Indonesia to ease muscle and joint pain.

Body Tune, which specializes in the traditional Thai massage which does not use oil, offers a full menu of spa services like Sparoma- aromatherapy, volcanic stone, Swedish, shiatsu, holistic, which is a combination of Swedish and shiatsu, twin, cellulite, Thai foot, hand, chair, and chair with scalp.

It also has a number of body treatments like granular two-in-one scrub massage, Dead Sea salt scrub, seaweed body scrub, honey body polish, body moor mud wrap, body bleaching; underarm whitening, whitening scrub, seaweed moor mud wrap, and oatmeal nourishing buff.

Also available are facial treatments like the aroma facial massage, facial scrub with mask and non-surgical facelift. It also offers hand and foot care services like spa manicure, spa pedicure, foot spa, manicure, and pedicure.

Body Tune has branches at SM City North Edsa, SM City Bicutan, SM City Bacoor, SM City Baguio, SM City Dasmariñas, SM City Batangas, SM South Mall, SM City Pampanga, SM City Marilao, SM City Fairview, SM City Cebu, SM City Sucat, SM Mall of Asia, Market! Market! and Batangas City.

BODY Tune has a number of body treatments like Dead Sea salt scrub, seaweed body scrub, honey body polish, body moor mud wrap, seaweed moor mud wrap and oatmeal nourishing buff.

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Kris, Boy praise the Xändo™ weight loss science

When the local queen and king of talk Kris Aquino and Boy Abunda first heard of the breakthrough science of Xando weight loss tablets, they were more than eager to try it.

Xändo tablet is the all-natural, clinically proven solution for the simple, comfortable and effective weight loss that has let thousands of Europeans and Asians keep in top shape. It has a patented formula tailored for the modern, busy lifestyle, making it the perfect dietary product for Kris and Boy.

Developed by the leading European weight management expert Nils Mortensen, Xändo effectively reduces weight by safely blocking calories from carbohydrates, starch and sugar in the digestive tract, and by burning stored, unwanted fat.

Known to have discerning tastes, Kris and Boy use the best products available. Hence, when it comes to maintaining weight, they only use Xändo tablets.

More than a weight loss tablet, Xändo for them is the solution to lasting weight control. "What sets Xändo apart from other dietary products is the revolutionary science behind it," Boy declares.

In a European study conducted by Dr. Erling Thom, a noted European researcher on weight management, it revealed that people who are using Xändo tablets lost three times more weight than diet alone and 85% of weight lost is body fat.

The results are supported by Roald Strand, a leading Singaporean weight control expert, who subjected Xändo tablets to various clinical trials. In Strand's studies, the results were the consistent—people using Xändo tablets showed three times more weight loss and 85% of weight lost was body fat.

Aside from being effective, Xändo is safe to use. "Unlike other dietary pills, Xändo is 100% natural—it's caffeine- and laxative-free—so you can be assured that there are no side effects," Kris points out.

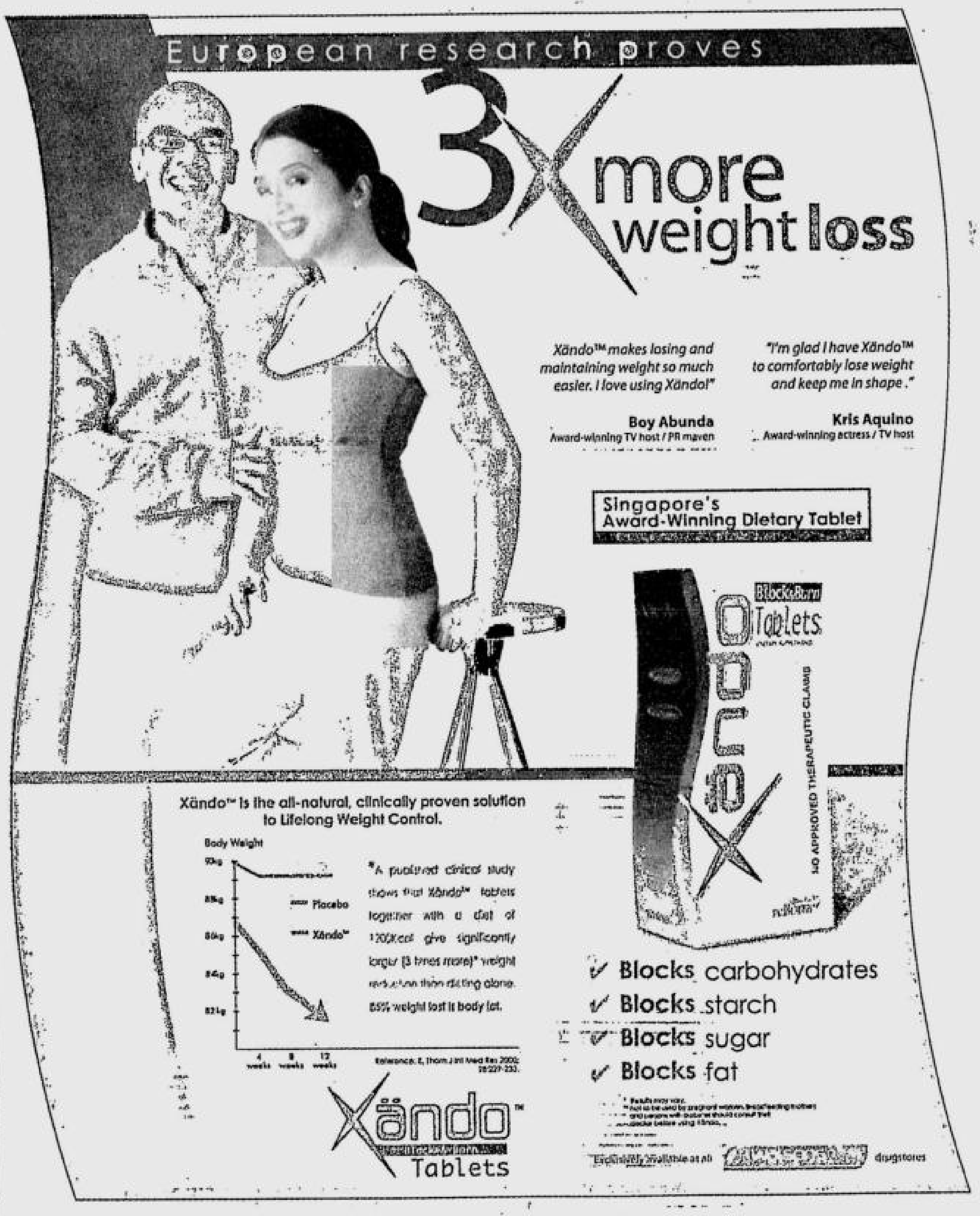
Boy immediately adds how Xando guarantees product safety. "If Xändo users have not experience any change in their weight in 90 days, Xändo will gladly give them a refund based on a prior agreement. That's how confident Xändo is that it's safe and effective."

Kris and Boy are positive that they will stay in shape no matter how busy they'll be in the future, as long as they are using Xändo. "Xändo keeps us in top shape. It's proven safe and effective," attests Kris. To this, Boy gleefully adds "We've finally found the answer to maintaining our weight," as he smiled at his best friend.

Xändo has taken Europe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia by storm. It has been proven safe and effective by various independent lab studies. Simply take 1 to 2 tablets before each meal to begin the Xando slimming action.

Xändo is exclusively available at all Watsons outlets. For more information, please call the **Xändo HealthLines 727-9999 and 0922-88-XANDO (92636).**

Xändo's dynamic duo:- Boy Abunda and Kris Aquino sign up as Xändo tablet's endorsers. Present during the signing are (1st-2nd row, L-R) Perfectaire President Wilfred Chua, Manager Dondon Monteverde, Perfectaire Director Romeo Que, Masterminds-Asia Communications President Sunny Ku and Perfectaire Director Robert Tanchip. Perfectaire is the exclusive distributor of Xändo tablets in the country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3X more weight loss
Xändo™ makes losing and maintaining weight so much easier. I love using Xändo!"
Boy Abunda
Award-winning TV host / PR maven
"I'm glad I have Xändo™ to comfortably lose weight and keep me in shape."
Kris Aquino
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Block&Burn Tablets
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A published clinical study shows that Xändo™ tablets together with a diet of 1200Kcal give significantly larger (3 times more) weight reduction than dieting alone. 85% weight lost is body fat.
Reference: E. Thom J Int Med Res 2000; 28:229-233.
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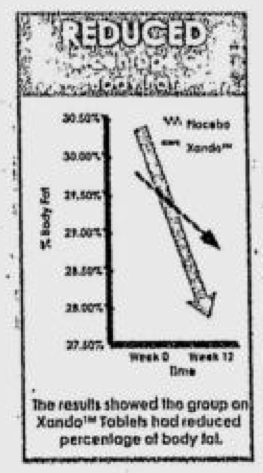
EUROPEAN STUDY REVEALS MORE WEIGHT LOSS BY BLOCKING EXCESS CARBO

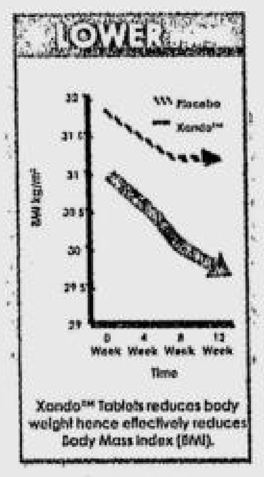
REDUCED

PARAMETER	INITIALLY (Base line)	END OF STUDY
Waist	35.1 In	34.2 In
Hip	37.5 In	36.9 In

At the end of the study, the group on Xando™ had reduced waist and hip circumference.



The results showed the group on Xando™ Tablets had reduced percentage of body fat.



Xando™ Tablets reduces body weight hence effectively reduces Body Mass Index (BMI).

Reference: E. Thom J Int Med Res 2000: 28:229-233.

A clinical study published in the International Journal of Medical Research revealed that people using Xändo tablets lost three times more weight than dieting alone, according to Dr. Erling Thom, one of the leading European researchers in weight management.

Erling Thom, Ph D.

Dr. Thom, an accomplished researcher who has published over 10 academic papers on weight management, also said that the clinical trial showed that 85% of weight lost was body fat.

Dr. Thom discussed the results of the clinical trial in line with other new developments in effective weight control. "We took a group of overweight people and divided them into two test groups. The groups were balanced in terms of weight and age to ensure they were comparable," Dr. Thom narrated. "Both groups were placed on a 1200Kcal diet. One was given Xändo tablets while the other was given tablets with no active ingredients."

"The results showed the group on the Xändo tablets lost three times more weight than the other group. The placebo group lost an average of 1.2 kg while the group on the Xändo tablets lost 3.5 kg," recounted Dr. Thom.

Nils Mortensen

"We then looked at where the weight loss came from. It is important that healthy weight loss be predominantly from fat, not muscle tissue. For the group using Xändo tablets, 85% of their weight loss was fat loss," explained Dr. Thom.

Xändo tablets inventor Mr. Nils Mortensen was pleased to hear the results of the study. "The reason I invented Xändo was to help people lose weight safely," he said.

Xändo, the revolutionary weight loss tablet, works by blocking excess carbohydrates to prevent fat buildup and promote burning of fat.

INT'L LAB STUDIES PROVE XANDO TO BE SAFE

Xändo, the revolutionary weight loss tablet that has taken European countries and Singapore by storm, has been comprehensively tested by various independent lab studies and proven to be safe and effective.

No micro-contaminants and harmful elements found

After thorough clinical trials, an independent laboratory study made in France has concluded that Xändo tablet is free from harmful elements. Another independent Singaporean study revealed that Xändo does not contain adulterants or common poisons. A similar study also done in Singapore showed after exhaustive clinical trials that there were no micro-contaminants found in Xändo.

100% natural

The results of independent lab studies also proved that Xändo safely sheds and prevent unwanted fat buildup.

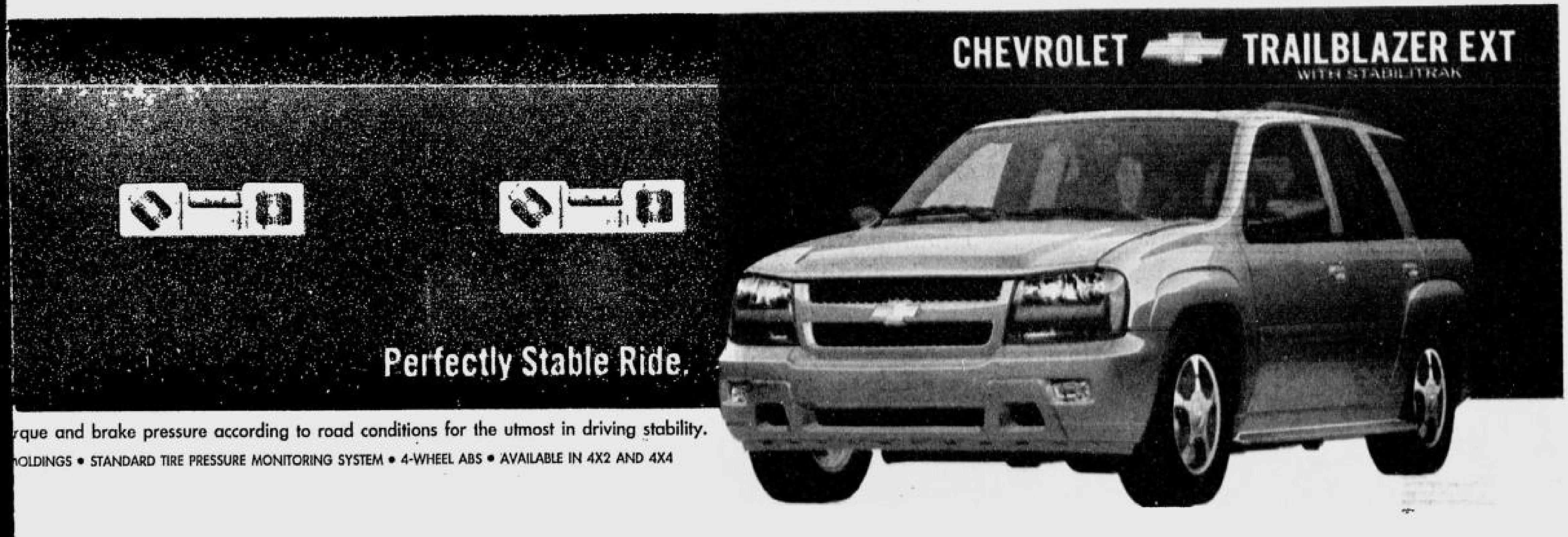
Developed by the leading European researcher on weight management Mr. Nils Mortensen, Xändo contains all natural extracts that make up Xändo's patented formula. According to Mr. Mortensen, Xändo's all-natural formula works by blocking excess carbohydrates from food such as pasta, rice and noodles and 'small' carbohydrates from food like pastries, cakes and chocolates, and preventing excess carbohydrates from being converted to body fat, thereby thwarting further weight gain.

Caffeine and laxative-free

Unlike other weight loss products, Xändo does not contain caffeine and laxative that will leave users feeling uncomfortable. Now Filipinos can enjoy Xändo's safe slimming action that has been enjoyed throughout Europe and Asia by simply taking one to two tablets before each meal.

Xändo™ partners with Watsons

Perfectaire President Wilfred Chua (second from left) and Watsons General Manager Andrew Denby (third from left) seal the deal of Watsons' exclusive distributorship of Xändo tablets in the country, as Perfectaire General Manager Niña Laçap (first from left) and Watsons Merchandise Controller in Health Division Earl Stanley Perez (fourth from left) look on.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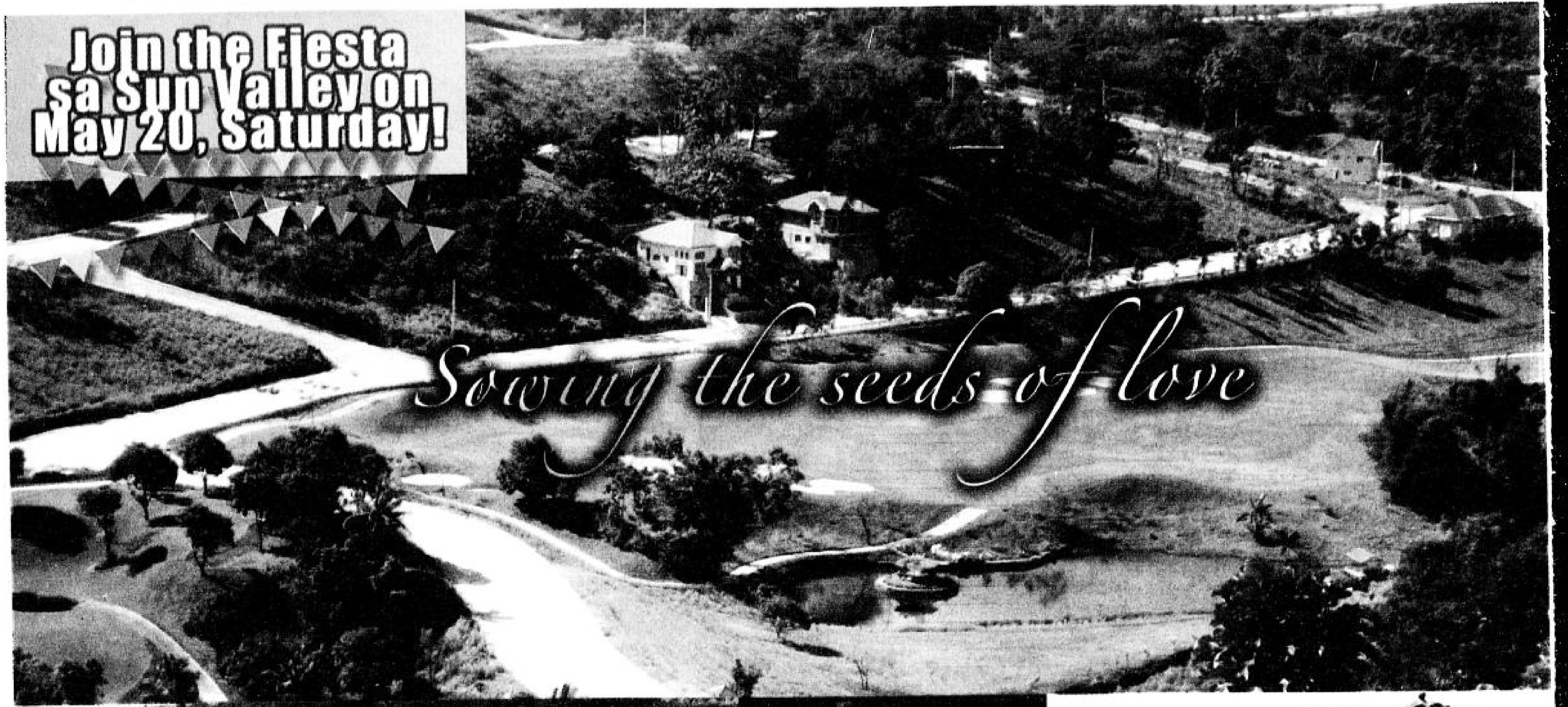
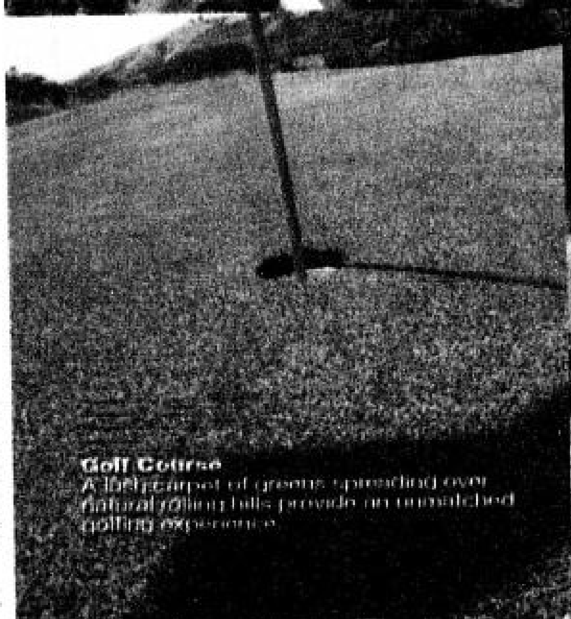
Exciting beauty issue

BECAUSE WOMEN DESERVE ONLY THE best, Marie Claire magazine recently presented the winners of the Prix d'Excellence de la Beauté 2006, a prestigious award given to the nine best cosmetic products in the world.

In its May issue, Marie Claire surveys men on four very different makeup looks, ranging from none-at-all to sexy and smoldering, to let women in on what the opposite sex really thinks of your makeup. Beauty editors all over the world also reveal their fool-proof beauty secrets in this month's "Global Beauty." And finally, Marie Claire shows readers how to take the most exciting makeup styles from this season's runways and use them in real life. Grab your copy of Marie Claire's May issue featuring Jennifer Garner on the cover, now available in magazine stands and bookstores at P125 per copy.

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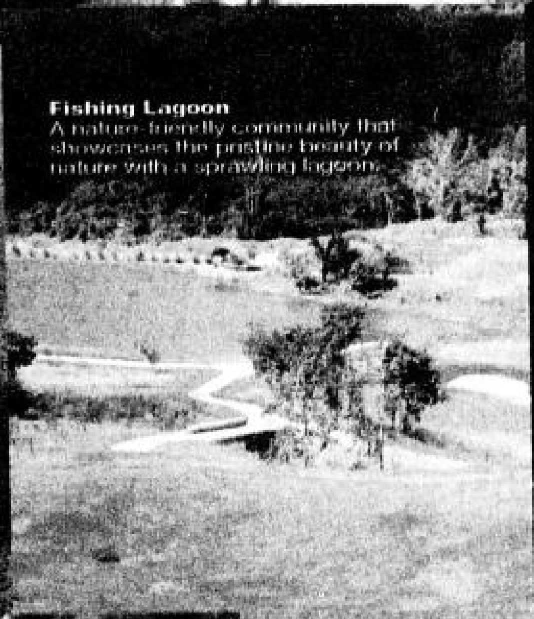
Fishing Lagoon
A nature-friendly community that showcases the pristine beauty of nature with a sprawling lagoon.

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Club House
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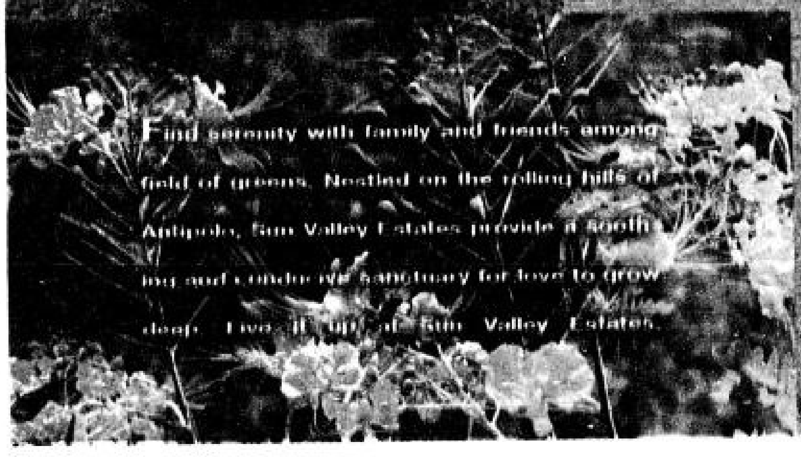
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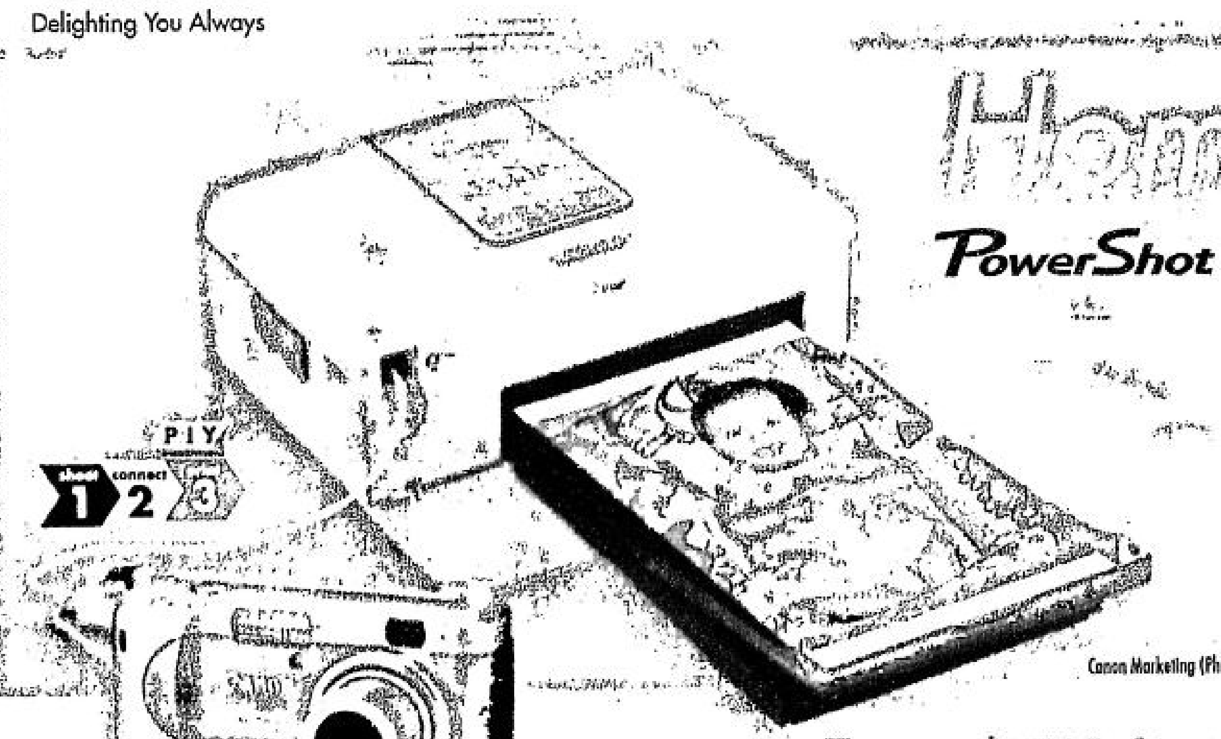

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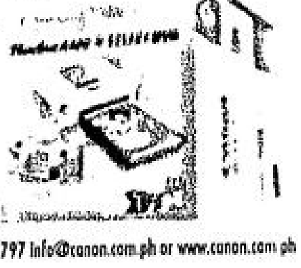

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No need to be alarmed about 'whitening'

To be safe, keep in mind that you must use only reputable brands. Don't experiment with cheap products

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

LAST WEEK'S NEWS about the bad effects of whitening cream on some users in Asia shouldn't really disturb you if you have been sticking to reputable brands.

I hardly know anyone now who doesn't use or hasn't tried using whitening products. Even a few men I know use or have tried a whitening product; still some are at least open to using it.

To be safe, keep in mind that you must use only reputable brands. Don't experiment with cheap products that flood the market; chances are they're bleaching agents which are, you must know, harmful to your skin.

Most of the reliable brands have vitamin or natural extracts such as licorice. Others have hydroquinone and tretinoin that fight skin discoloration and melanin production; they're all right at a small dosage. (The breakdown of ingredients and their effects is in Metro's June issue.) Even if you use your whitening cream/toner/sunblock routinely, take time to read the ingredients.

As we've said often, whitening products aren't supposed to bleach you; they're supposed to even out the color of your skin, revitalize the cells and thus give you that healthy glow.

Most important, keep in mind that you can't go under the sun for too long and not have blotches or sun spots, especially when you're using whitening products.

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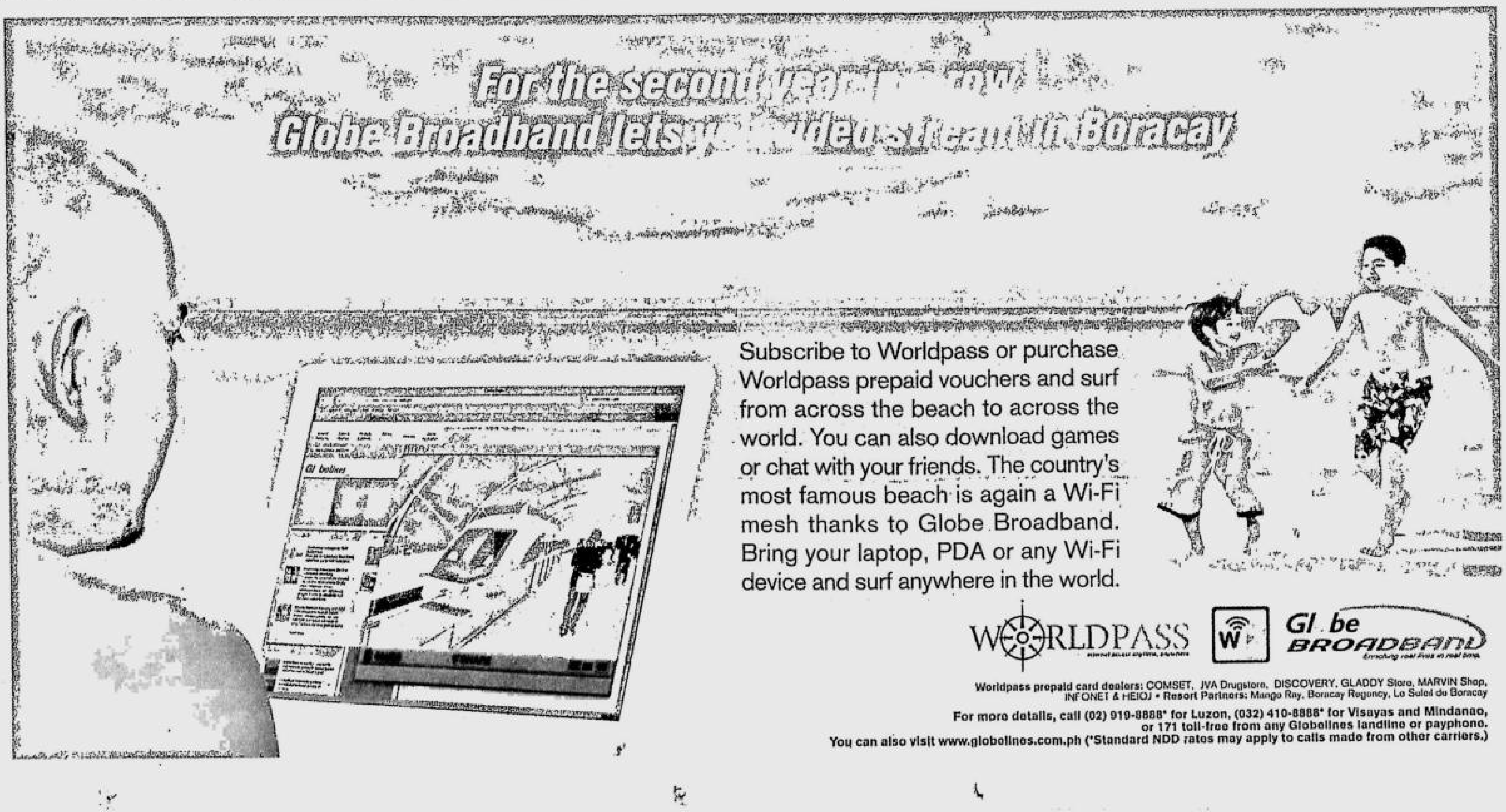
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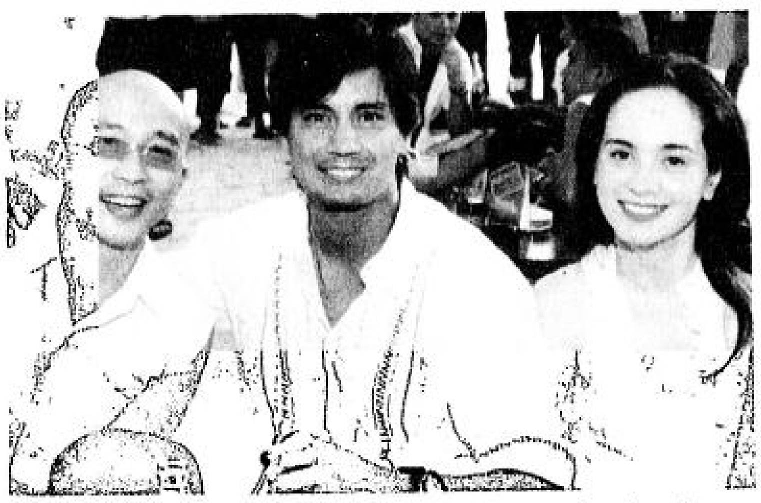


ARIEL Comia of Century Tuna's ad agency, Pitargue, Comia and Villaruel Communications, with beautiful couple Richard Gomez and Lucy Torres-Gomez; at left, happy twosome, Century Tuna's hotshot EVP/COO Ricardo Po and head-turner Tricia Panlilio

TOP model Raya Mananquil

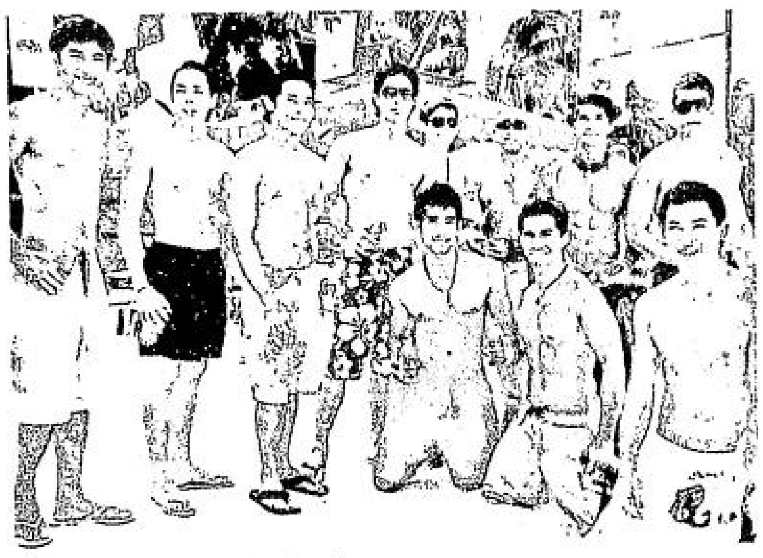
HIP couple. Cinderella's Marielle Santos and Century Tuna executive Leo Po

Hot fest of beaches and bodies

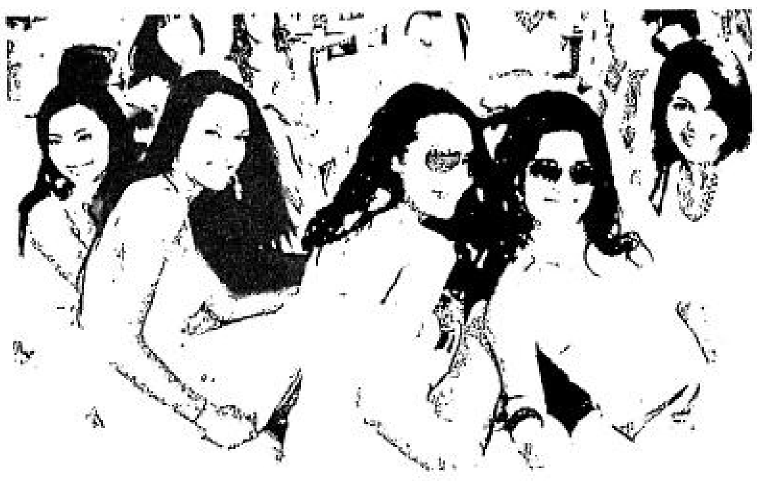
WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system



SUPERBODS Beach Fest hunks



GORGEOUS female finalists

WINNERS Jon Mullally (second from left) and Michelle Padua (second from right) with Ayeth Evangelista, Ginger Borja and Gigi Angkaw, all from Century Tuna

MAX'S good-looking Jim Fuentebella; CJ Jesena, senior division manager, Ayala Land; Ronald Pineda of Folded & Hung; Jayjay Onrubia; Schu's Ruby Gan; and fashion designer Randy Ortiz

CENTURY TUNA CONDUCTED A colossal search for its next image models with the "Century Tuna Superbods Beach Fest" in Boracay, where you could find perfectly chiseled hunks and gals just everywhere, *palanggas*.

The country's leading canned tuna brand definitely knew how to hold an awesome "search to end all searches." It gave away a cool P1 million in cash prizes to the next hottest male and female models who would appear on Century Tuna's TV commercials, print ads, billboards and posters. The brand's hotshot executives—**Joseph Pineda**, **Leo Po**, **Ayeth Evangelista** and **Gigi Angkaw**—transformed Bora's Pier One into one huge party place. Around 55 young hunks and gorgeous women tried their luck to become the next Century Tuna models who must personify the Century Tuna profile: a great body, glowing skin and a healthy lifestyle, *palanggas*.

Emceeing the event were TV host **JM Rodriguez** and hot model **Bianca Valerio**. It opened with the contestants parading their hot bodies before the judges, such as **Ariel Comia**, VP-creative director of Century Tuna's ad agency, Pitargue, Comia & Villaruel Communications; talent manager **Douglas Quijano**; former Century Tuna image model, my *palangga*, gorgeous **Phoemela Barranda**; "Us Girls" host **Angel Aquino**; model **Raya Mananquil**; "MTV Bling" host **Tim Yap**; society photographer **Alex van Hagen**; actor-TV host **Richard Gomez** and "Shall We Dance" hostess **Lucy Torres-Gomez**; and Century Tuna marketing manager Ayeth Evangelista.

The group was pared down to 16 finalists, who had to show their wit in answering the challenging questions from the tough judges.

The winners were Fil-Am beauty **Michelle Padua** and drop-dead half-British, half-Pinoy heartthrob **Jon Mullally**. They deposited in their accounts a cool half a million pesos each and a one-year modeling contract with Century Tuna, natch!

First runners-up were **Grant Hooks** and **Elaine Gallardo**, while second runners-up were **Chris Samson** and **Danielle Piolo**.

Before the grand competition night, celebs, models, top personalities and invitees dashed over to the Century Tuna Superbods event where they were treated to free massage, hair braiding and henna tattoo. They also got to show off their athletic side in the beach games, aero boxing and taebo session.

Chilling it were adorable fitness gal **Chinggay Andrada**; architect **Victor Consunji**; handsome **Geoff Rodriguez**; vivacious TV personality **Jackie Castillejo**; international model **Teresa Herrera**, Century Tuna poster boy **Will Devaughn**; PDI's Just Shop editor **Jenni Epperson**; statuesque **Tricia Panlilio** with her three handsome sons, **Quintin**, **Matteo** and adorable **Luca Cu-Unjieng**; **Socky Pitargue**; "it" girl **CJ Arabata**; and **Rachel Lobangco**, who did a wildfire dance with the Boracay Dragon Dancers.

Then it was time to rock and roll, *palanggas*. Rocking the dance floor of Pier One to fantastic party sounds were guest DJs, PR wonder boy **GP Reyes** and **Karl** of Superfly, no less, dahlings.

Now, how do you truly bring the sizzling temperature down in a bash like the Superbods beach fest? Easy, give away cool raffle prizes such as Motorola Razr V31 cell phones, Canon digital cameras, iPod Shuffle and Nano, Havaianas, and P5,000 cash.

Now you know why Century Tuna is always in my list of buys. After all, Sunday at my house is not complete without our Salade Nicoise for dinner, using Century Tuna, of course.

Check out Century Tuna's Choice Tuna Fillet. It will blow your socks off, *palanggas*! Yummy.

CENTURY Tuna's former poster boy Will Devaughn with Superbods winners Michelle Padua and Jon Mullally

TRICIA Panlilio with adorable kids Luca, Matteo and Quintin Cu-unjieng

MY PAL Pepper Teehankee with Patrick Tan, vice president for Seair, and PR whiz Edd Fuentes

SOCKY Pitargue

Expansion

There are malls. Then there are the Ayala Malls. An undeniable pioneer in the field, the Ayala Malls have time and again proved to be a cut above the rest, enhancing the shopping and entertainment experience through their superior service, customer-centric ways and revolutionary approach.

The Ayala Malls include, of course, favored destinations Glorietta, Greenbelt, Alabang Town Center, Ayala Center Cebu and Market! Market!, Metropoint Mall and Pavilion Mall.

A new oasis will rise amid the bustling urban landscape of Quezon City. Slated to open in 2007, Trinoma will be a four-level super regional shopping center that will have the best retail, dining and entertainment shops for the whole *famille*. It will have a direct connection to the North Avenue station of the MRT. It will also have an amazing multi-floor terraced landscape for al fresco dining.

As if that were not enough, at the Bonifacio City will rise two new destinations. The Retail Promenade will have its stores located in twin boulevards bounding a huge park. Another development will highlight food specialty retail and service establishments, which will give the public a taste of genuine multicultural lifestyles.

Star City Ayala Center Cebu will have an expansion. A new building will house the best local and international brands. The Lagoon, meanwhile, will reflect Cebu's fun and vibrant culture; it will serve as the focal point of the mall. These exciting transformations are set to give Cebu shoppers the ultimate sun-up-to-sun-down lifestyle experience.

And finally, Makati will witness the rise of Greenbelt 5. It will be the center for high fashion, Filipino and international. It will also house specialty shops.

The expansion plans were recently announced by Ayala Land chair **Fernando Zobel de Ayala** and Ayala Corp. president **Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala**.

Hey, you can always be sure, *palanggas*, that there is always tons of fun and excitement going on at Ayala Malls! But where else, *n'est ce pas*.

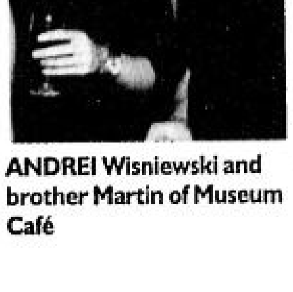
Wet and wild in Iloilo

Winner's Gym, in cooperation with Eros Botica, brings to Iloilo "Wet Summer with Keanna Reeves," which combines street partying, featuring the La Carlota Drumbeaters, and a sexy all-male fashion show, tonight at 8 at Robinsons Place, Paseo, Iloilo.

Check it out, all you *palanggas* from Iloilo and Bacolod. For tickets and reservations, call Eros Botica at 3000320, or Winner's Gym at 3375784, or Robinsons Place-Iloilo. It will really be a wet-and-wild bash, *palanggas*.

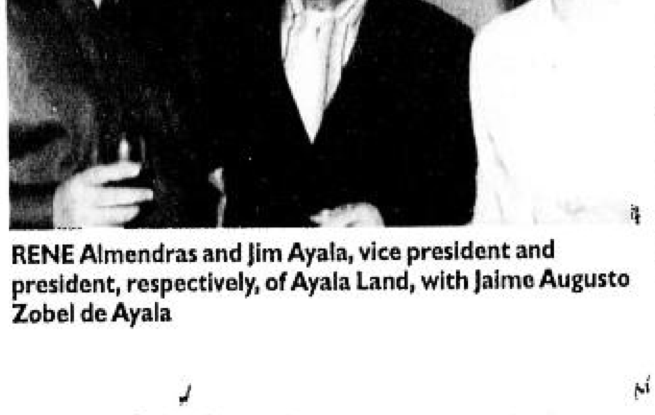
WINE LOVERS. Zelly Tan; Anne Marie Saguil; Vince Tan, EVP Ayala Land; and businessman Loi Saguil

MIRIAM Katigbak, EVP of Ayala Land; Chris Gotanco, NTCC director; and Angie Lacson, senior VP, Ayala Land



ANDREI Wisniewski and brother Martin of Museum Café

FILADELFO S. Rojas Jr., chair of BCDA, and handsome Fernando Zobel de Ayala of Ayala Land



RENE Almendras and Jim Ayala, vice president and president, respectively, of Ayala Land, with Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala

AYALA Mall's roses. Myrna Cruz-Fernandez, senior division manager; AC Ocampo, manager; Rowena Tomeldan, VP; good-looking Francois Lopin of Christian Dior; Catherine Ada, manager, Louis Vuitton Guam; and workaholic Rhea de Vera, general manager of Louis Vuitton Phils.

Time for an Angel

By Bernadette Joy Lopez
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

YOUNG STAR ANGEL LOCSIN went out of her way just to see her Timex billboard on one of the major thoroughfares in the city.

"I even paid the toll fee just to see the billboard," she shares. "I've been waiting for the ads to come out for the longest time."

It's easy to understand Locsin's excitement over her role as the newest Timex endorser alongside award-winning actor and the brand's perennial favorite Piolo Pascual.

The sleek, futuristic, edgy and sexy Timex "What's Next" campaign proves worthy of a detour, with shades of steel and blue tempering the fiery reds and steamy gazes, making one wonder how the images manage to be hot and cool at the same time.

THE TWO biggest stars of the two biggest networks team up for one explosive Timex "What's Next?" campaign.

The ads, shot by celebrity photographer Xander Angeles, lure viewers to read between the lines and think "what's next?"

"It's like shooting a mini-movie," Angeles says. "There's a story behind each photo." His wife Cheryl handled the campaign's set and costume production for the three-day shoot.

Practical

Only Timex has successfully staged what's dubbed as a "casting coup," the Herculean task of putting together two of the biggest stars from rival networks into one major advertising campaign. It's also only in the Philippines that Timex uses celebrity endorsers.

Both endorsers staunchly believe in the importance of wearing a watch, not only for "*porma*" (as Locsin puts it), but also for more practical purposes.

"Given my lifestyle it's really important to be fully aware of the time, and often I'm confused about what day it is," says Locsin, referring to her hectic schedule that often leaves her confused about dates. Her favorite Timex watch is the simple yet elegant Perpetual Calendar, which accurately keeps track of the date.

ANGEL Locsin and Piolo Pascual share tips on buying and caring for timepieces.

Locsin isn't the only celebrity who wears a watch for practical reasons. "When you're always on the go," Pascual says, "whenever you check your time you can actually organize your schedule, your day pretty well."

To Pascual, a watch is a status symbol. "[A watch] reflects what kind of a person you are, your social status and at the same time your character," he says. "It speaks a lot about you."

He first saw a Timex watch when he was barely 9 years old, he shares. His mother gifted him with a Timex, and the first thing that came to his mind was that it's "*pang-mayaman.*"

Comfort

Since watches reveal far more than just the time, the endorsers offer a number of tips for those keen, but clueless, on buying a watch.

"Go for comfort. Go for what can reflect your personality," Pascual says. "If you have the money, of course you can choose different watches for different occasions, but if you're practical you'd want to choose something you can wear with anything."

His favorite watch, the top-of-the-line Automatic, can be worn with formal slacks or with jeans. "I like wearing it because anything matches it," he says. "And it's expensive!"

Locsin, who prefers big square watches, is on the same wavelength as her new leading man.

"When you're just starting your watch collection, buy something that goes with anything," she says. "A watch with a white strap fits in well with any casual outfit."

"For formal occasions, buy a watch with a thin silver strap," she adds. To Locsin, these two watches are the classic pieces for those on a budget.

Those who intend to collect watches will delight in the many styles and designs Timex offers. As the veteran endorser Pascual puts it, "Timex has the right model, the right design for every occasion."

Locsin has about 20-30 Timex watches. What about her other watches? "I don't use them anymore," she assures.

Pascual, meanwhile, says he has retired his non-Timex watches by returning them to their boxes. "All the watches in my drawer are all Timex. I don't go out on occasions without wearing a Timex," he reveals.

Pascual, on his fourth stint for Timex, brushes off the idea that Timex cemented its market leadership in the Philippines because of his endorsement.

"Anyone can wear it—anyone wears it, anyway," he says, in reference to Timex topping the surveys as the top watch brand in the country for the past five years. "I think the most important thing is that anyone can afford it—any class, any person."

Angel Locsin is the newest Timex endorser alongside award-winning actor and the brand's perennial favorite Piolo Pascual

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No need to be alarmed about 'whitening'

From page E2

I myself have learned it the hard way. You can't have too much sun and whitening product. In short, you can't have your cake and eat it too.

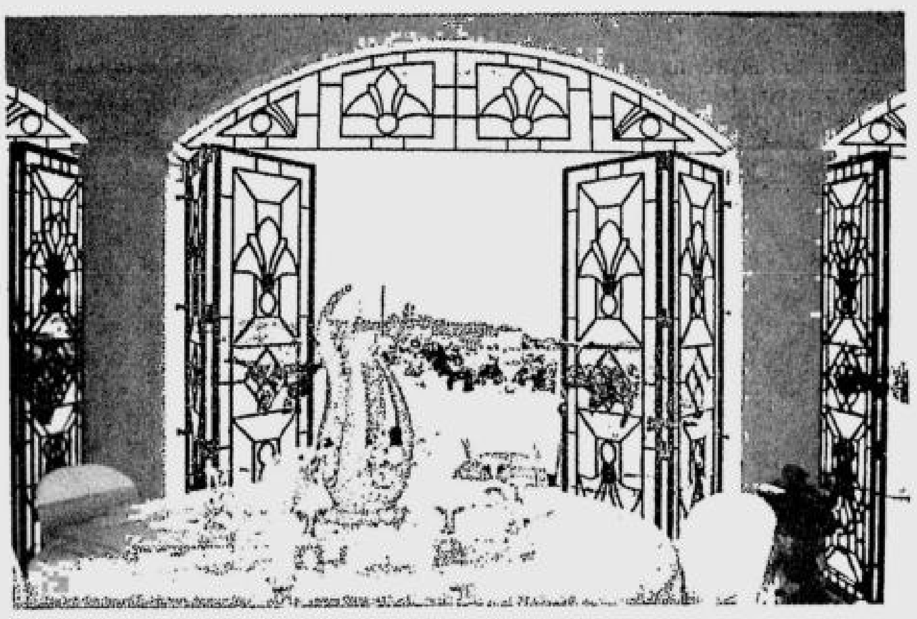
This explains why many women, even the very young ones, have brown spots no matter how smooth their skin. This is because they're not careful enough to avoid sun overexposure.

Revisiting Deedee

It was a happy-sad feeling visiting journalist and former President **Cory Aquino** spokesperson **Deedee Siytangco** in her weekend home in Tagaytay. Happy because I remembered the fun laidback afternoons of old there. And sad because Deedee's husband and soulmate, **Sonny**, is no longer around.

Sonny died of pancreatic cancer last November. Deedee is nowhere near getting over him. That much we felt when we visited Deedee recently here. Sonny remains so much a part of their Tagaytay home, as he is of Deedee's and their children's lives.

The house is on a ridge with a breathtaking view of Taal Lake, the sky and the greenscape. Inside, Deedee can sit on the bed of the master's bedroom and go over one photo album after another of the family, particularly of Sonny with the kids.



BELLA Vista

There's a photo of an exuberant Sonny, with the youngest **AJ** (a young man already) lying flat on his stomach, on Sonny's lap, with Sonny's hand raised as if to spank him.

It's a "birthday ritual," Deedee told us. Sonny would playfully do that to his kid every birthday, no matter how big (literally) and grown up his sons had become.

A few steps beyond the room is the balcony looking down on the sloping garden and beyond it, the Tagaytay panorama. On the rail here, Deedee recalled, Sonny and she would hang their towels to dry every morning. Shortly after Sonny's death, Deedee forgot to hang hers, only to find it later, out hanging on the balcony rail. To this day Deedee believes that was Sonny's way of greeting her from beyond.

DEEDEE Siytangco with son David, who runs Bella Vista.

Shortly before he died, Sonny and Deedee agreed that since the house and garden have ample space, they would open their weekend home to private functions. They called their house "Bella Vista."

Today Deedee is fulfilling that agreement. The Siytangcos have opened their weekend home to select private functions and private caterer friends led by **Glenda Barretto**.

Deedee has also engaged the catering services of old family friends and "*suki*" caterers, **Andrew** and **Connie Pacumio**, president of Town's Delight in Cavite.

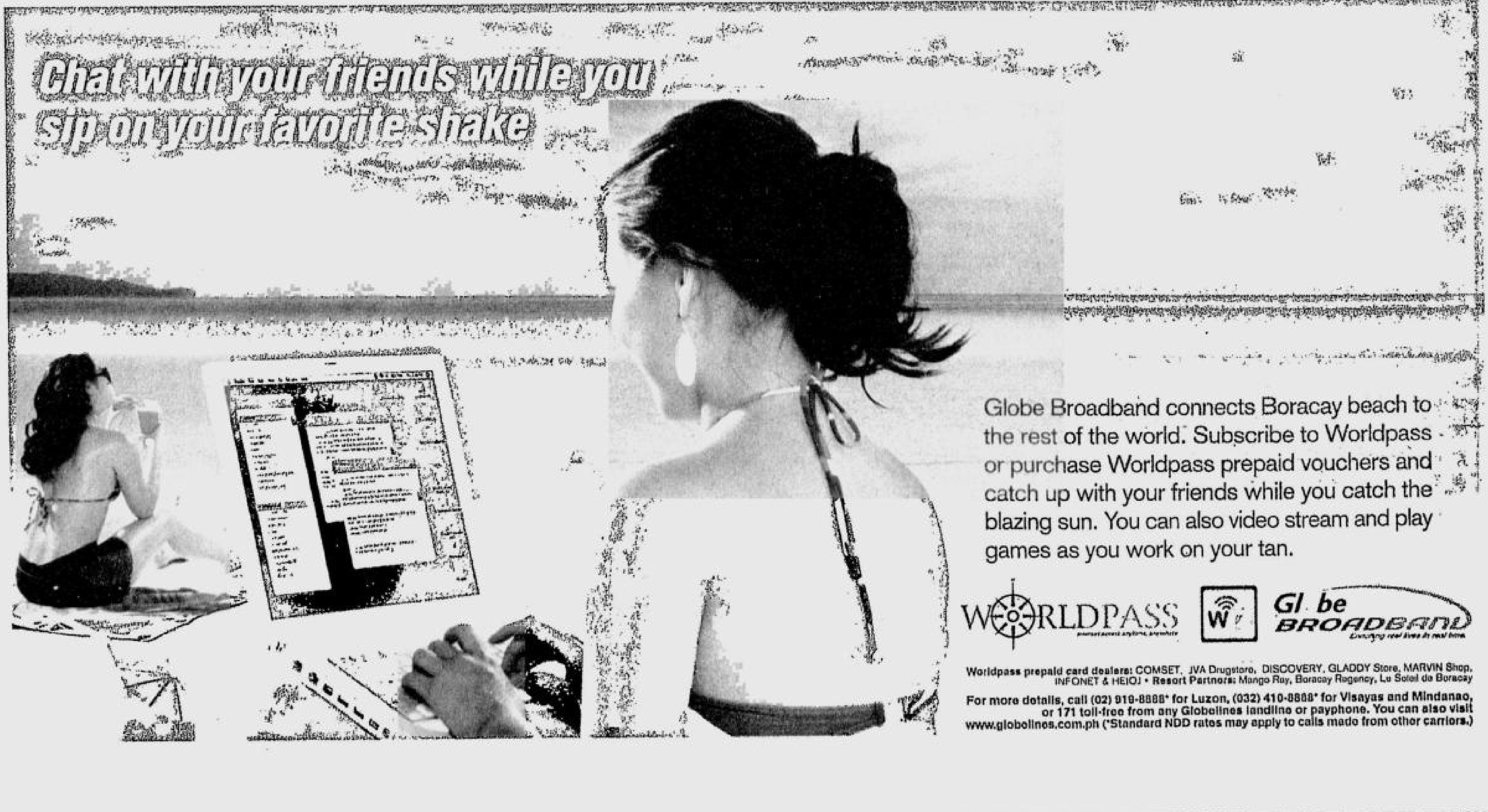
Andrew specializes in very interesting Cavite dishes such as Cavite *adobo* of pork belly and quail eggs, and Lihim ni Aguinaldo dessert. The range covers the popular local dishes, from chicken *gallantina* to *lengua*. There are menus to choose from for debuts and small weddings. (For details, call **Sandee Masigan**, tel. 0920-9030840.)

Deedee and her children are getting their routine back, after a loss in the family. But Deedee draws some happiness from AJ's insight about the richness of his parents' 39-year marriage.

"Look at it as a long-running TV series that's bound to end sometime," he told his mom, "but you had the best, very rich season."

It's a bit of good news that our friend **Ethel Timbol** is done with her surgery and is out of the hospital. Hopefully, she will be back in the lifestyle circle soon.

An interesting bit of news is that **Lia Bernardo**, Metro Society editor and corporate consultant, is not only into meditation, but is also into healing.



Chat with your friends while you sip on your favorite shake

Globe Broadband connects Boracay beach to the rest of the world. Subscribe to Worldpass or purchase Worldpass prepaid vouchers and catch up with your friends while you catch the blazing sun. You can also video stream and play games as you work on your tan.

WORLDPASS
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Worldpass prepaid card dealers: COMSET, JVA Drugstore, DISCOVERY, GLADDY Store, MARVIN Shop, INFONET & HEIOJ • Resort Partners: Mango Ray, Boracay Regency, Le Soleil de Boracay

For more details, call (02) 919-8888* for Luzon, (032) 410-8888* for Visayas and Mindanao, or 171 toll-free from any Globelines landline or payphone. You can also visit www.globelines.com.ph (*Standard NDD rates may apply to calls made from other carriers.)

CrownAsia elegantly signs a new name across the blue skies of Sta. Rosa

CrownAsia Signature Homes are stand outs, wherever the new silk flags fly to herald a new project.

Hundreds of genius hours are spent before CrownAsia proclaims a new site as a "signature project." Such is the case with Valenza, Sta. Rosa.

Significant intercity locations. CrownAsia homeowners are self-made success stories. They need to live, work and play near business and productivity centers. Sta. Rosa is exactly this. Major world names in industry are positioned for their regional production, spawning a new town of technical and managerial stars.

Paseo de Santa Rosa

Outstanding site development themes. CrownAsia signature homes lean heavily on Italian elan to distinguish each project look from all others around the area.

Value-for-money technical excellence. The consultants, architects and engineers of CrownAsia labor to put more sense and save cents in each aspect of development. Space-saving features, practical technical specs allow CrownAsia to plow back savings into making signature projects outpace competition.

Sta. Rosa. The new boomtown of the upwardly mobile self-made success stories.

It's Southward Ho! New creative business minds are making the move away from the traditional Metro Manila central business districts to Sta. Rosa. With eyes set on enterprise opportunities in the growing population of Sta. Rosa and the increasing visitor critical mass of Tagaytay, the population of young investor entrepreneurs is steadily increasing. Valenza will provide the perfect home for this bright-eyed class of aggressive achievers.

SIGNATUREHOMES™

CROWN
Valenza
STA. ROSA

Center stage is the only place for a stand out.

There is only one village that stands out so proudly in boomtown Sta. Rosa. Valenza. As only fitting for a stand out, Valenza's architectural trademarks are classic cupolas, domes, and stunning landscaping.

Valenza is beautifully nestled in between cool Tagaytay and the blossoming town of Sta. Rosa. Shopping, entertainment and dining are only 5 minutes away from its gates. Alabang, a quick zip down the SLEX.

Before you make a firm choice, visit Valenza. It won't be hard to find, as it is easy to fall in love with.

CROWNASIA
Your home of choice.

For property preview, please call:
871-3882 / 873-1614 / 873-8412
visit www.crownasia.com.ph

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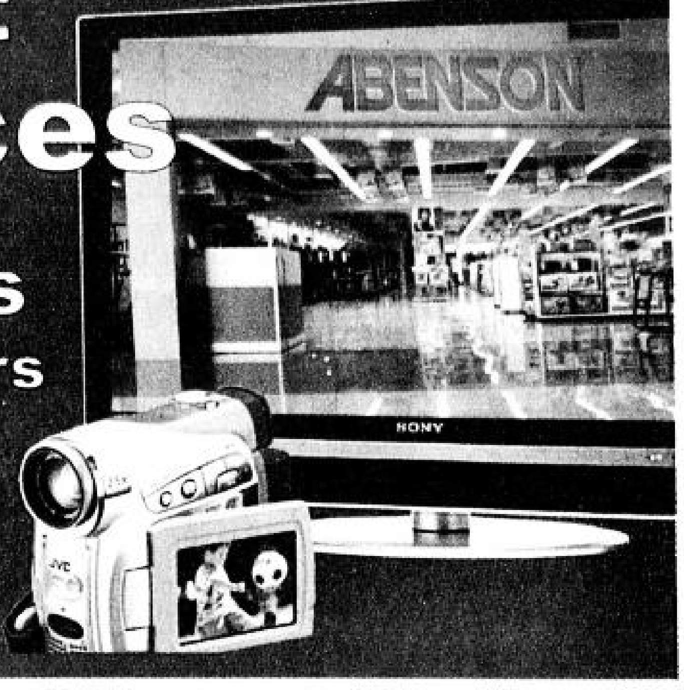
ABENSON

All about Appliances

Over 35 years
of giving customers
the Best Brands
for
Super Sulit Deals.



Basta't Appliance, Abenson!

Here are the reasons why...

1 Choose from only the Best Brands

You wouldn't have to worry if the appliances you bring home will only work a day or two, because with Abenson you're certain that you get the best brands available in the market today. Year after year, Abenson has been awarded dealer of the year by top brands like Sony, Samsung, Sharp, LG, Philips, Panasonic and Carrier among others. Shopping here won't feel like you were outsmarted by a devious salesman, because in Abenson, you're sure to get what you deserve,only the best.

2 We are in the business of making people happy.

The moment you step inside an Abenson store, you're guaranteed quality service from competent sales staff, cashiers, officers, helpers, and security personnel. This company values customer service because it's rooted to the main goal of making and keeping customers happy. After sales service is also a standard practice. Abenson is glad to be of service whether you're just about to buy a new appliance or you've brought from them five years ago.

3 Super Sulit Deals

It's never a rip off to shop in Abenson. Its prices are equally competitive in the market. More than that, aside from the product you take home, the service and assurance you get is surely worth every penny.

Best Brands Sulit Deals!

continued on page 2

SONY HANDYCAM®

shoot
playback 5.1ch Surround Sound
share
DOLBY DIGITAL
RW
DVD

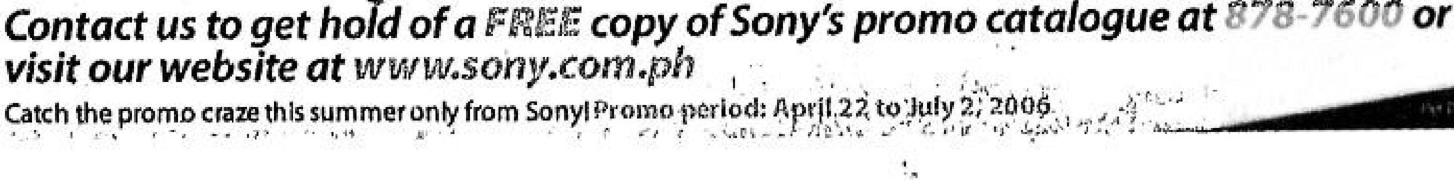
DVD Handycam® ▸Capture the thrills in 5.1ch. Surround Sound!

Superb images. Intense Surround Sound. Maximum ease-of-use. Sony's latest range of DVD Handycam® models combine the heart-pounding realism of 5.1ch. Surround Sound with stunning picture quality and the convenience of DVD format recording. Record sounds from every direction while shooting your video, and relive every exciting roar when you instantly playback and share on your 5.1ch. surround home theatre system. It's like being there all over again!

Sony's latest range of DVD Handycam® models

DVD605*	DVD705*	DVD755	DVD805	DVD905
• 1/6" Advanced HAD CCD • Carl Zeiss Vario-Tessar Lens • 20x Optical Zoom/ 800x Digital Zoom	• 1/5.5" 1.0 Mega Pixel CCD • Mega Pixel Engine • High Quality 16:9 Widescreen Recording	• 1/5.5" 1.0 Mega Pixel CCD • Mega Pixel Engine • Memory Stick Duo slot • Comes w/ External Mic	• 1/3" 3.31 Mega Pixels CCD • Mega Pixel Engine • High Resolution 3.0 Mega Pixels Still Image	• ClearVid CMOS Sensor with Enhanced Imaging Processor • Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T* Lens • 4 Mega Pixels Still Image Recording • 3.5" Clear Photo LCD Plus Touch Screen
P36,999	P44,999	P54,999	P64,999	P74,999

* DVD605 & DVD705 are not equipped with Dolby Digital 5.1 Creator Surround Sound recording function.



DVD-Recordable			DVD-Rewritable			DVD+Rewritable		
DMR30S1	DMR60DSS1	3DMR30S1	DMW30S2	DMW60DSS2	3DMW30S2	DPW30S2	DPW60DSS2	3DPW30S2
30 mins.	60 mins.	30 mins. (3 pcs.)	30 mins.	60 mins.	30 mins. (3 pcs.)	30 mins.	60 mins.	30 mins. (3 pcs.)
P 199	P 399	P 549	P 299	P 599	P 799	P 299	P 599	P 799

- For more info regarding promotions and compatible accessories, pls. contact below or visit your nearest Authorized Sony dealers.

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SONY *Sony Summer Pleasures 2006*

Contact us to get hold of a FREE copy of Sony's promo catalogue at 878-7600 or visit our website at www.sony.com.ph

Catch the promo craze this summer only from Sony! Promo period: April 22 to July 2, 2006

TOP 10 CONTINUED..

4 There's always an Abenson in your neighborhood.

Abenson has over 70 stores nationwide to make sure that it's always there to serve the Filipino community. You'll find an Abenson store at the heart of the city all the way into your neighborhood. Abenson guarantees you quality brands and service wherever you may be.

5 Shop your way to fantastic rewards.

Abenson values loyal customers.
Earn points and get rewarded with great gifts!

A wide variety of items await loyal customers, from flat irons to digital cameras. Not only that, these loyal customers get special privileges in promos and special events. This rewards program is just a simple gesture to remind them how much Abenson values its customers.

Sikat ka 'pag may
WOW!
MAGIC SING
6 months
0% interest
all credit cards
THE ORIGINAL
MAGIC SING

Ms. Regine Velasquez
Asia's Songbird
Proud owner of a WOW! magic sing

The **best-selling** magic sing

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ABENSON

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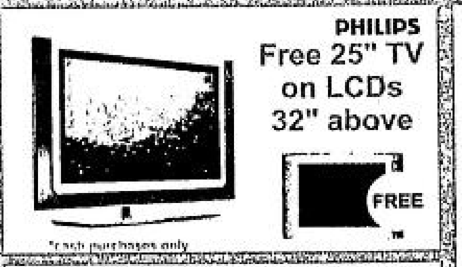
log on to www.wowcountry.com ph

6 Great Giveaways & lots of freebies

Abenson understands value for money. That's why it always comes up with special programs to make sure that customers get more for what they pay. From instant giveaways to big raffle promos, Abenson makes sure customers leave the store smiling and not feeling robbed.



PHILIPS
Free 25" TV on LCDs 32" above

*cash purchases only

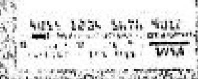
SAMSUNG
FREE

Free cellphones on LCDs
*selected models only

*Free standfan or deskfan on aircons

*selected models only

7 Choice of payment options



For many years, Abenson has established strong ties with the country's major banks. So whether it's to give card holders special privileges in major promos, special discounts, or 0% interest installment, Abenson makes sure that these credit card holders are well attended to.

8 Corporate Sales Service

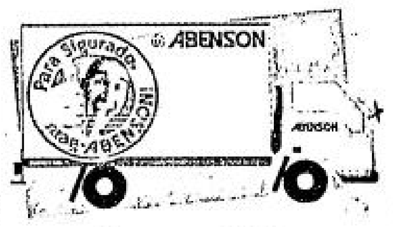
Abenson has serviced companies' needs for appliances. Whether it be furnishing the office with appliances, employee incentive programs or external consumer marketing needs, Abenson has provided solutions such as delivery and installation to implementing back-end processes for a number of corporate clients. For Abenson corporate sales you can call 6383407 or 7475057.

9 Hassle-free warranty up to 5 years

ABENSON EXTENDED WARRANTY

Apart from the usual manufacturer's warranty, Abenson offers extended warranty service which adds another year or two to your typical coverage. For as low as P3.00 a day, you can add more years of life to your appliance, giving more value to your investment.

10 On time home delivery



We want you to enjoy your appliances right away so we offer same day delivery, next day delivery and scheduled delivery service. You are assured that your appliances are delivered safely and promptly.

ABENSON Branch list

www.abenson.com

Alabang 850-8850/8914
Angeles (045) 888-9086
Avant 752-2315/19/20
Batangas (043) 723-6790
Biñan (049) 411-4511
Cabanatuan (044) 464-1482
Cainta 1 645-0402 to 04
Cainta 2 681-5301to 05
Calamba (049) 545-7034
Carmona (046)430-2701
Commonwealth 951-8976/8991
Congressional 927-9390/9520
Dau (045) 892-4295
Dasmariñas (046) 416-2104 /5287
Ermita 400-0248/49
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Fairview 939-7906/7810
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The Fort 886-6620/6491
Tarlac (045) 985-1278/
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SHARP

THE ELEGANT BLACK PANEL, BOTTOM SPEAKER, STUNNER.

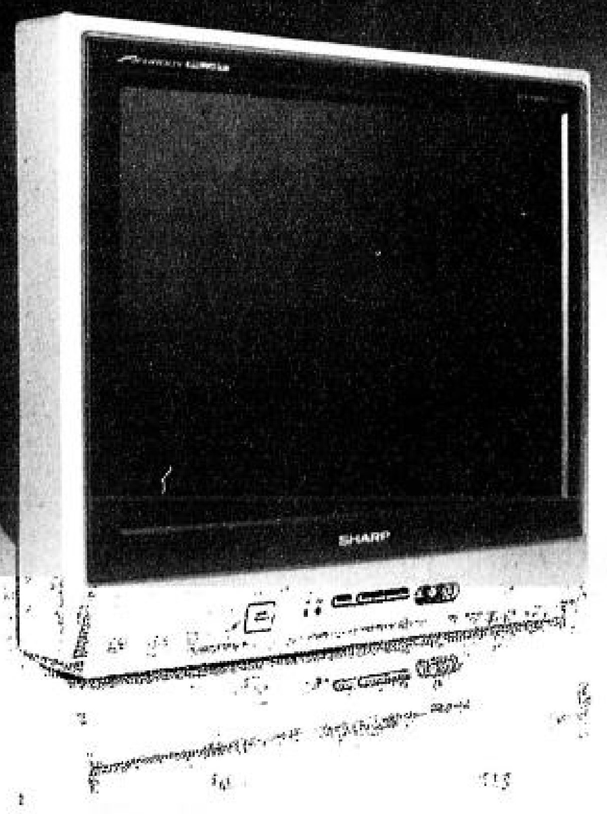
Watch your favorite movies in stunning enhanced audio on a TV with stunning good looks. This design will surely make your home look charmingly elegant.

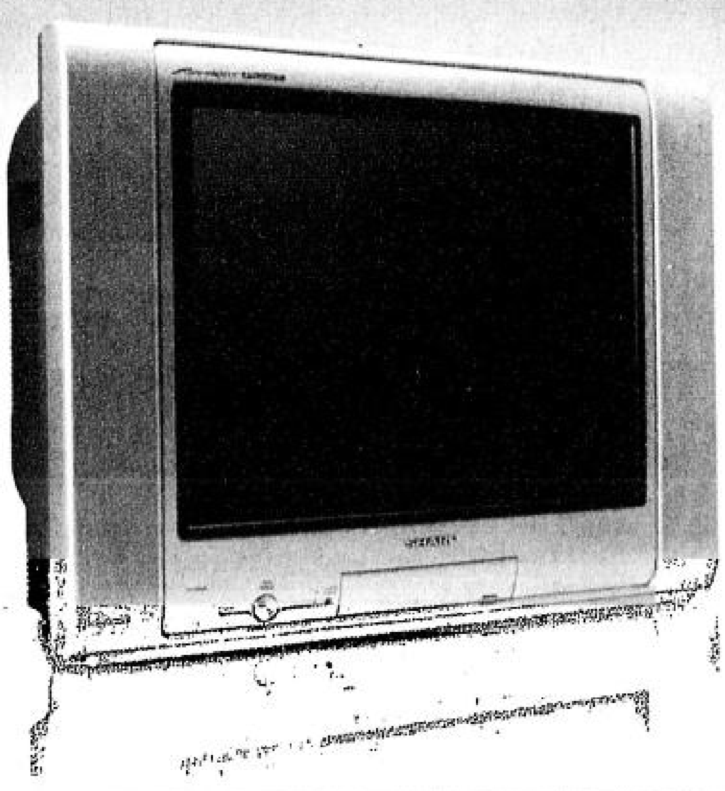
THE CLASSY SILVER PANEL, SIDE SPEAKER, ROOM CENTERPIECE.

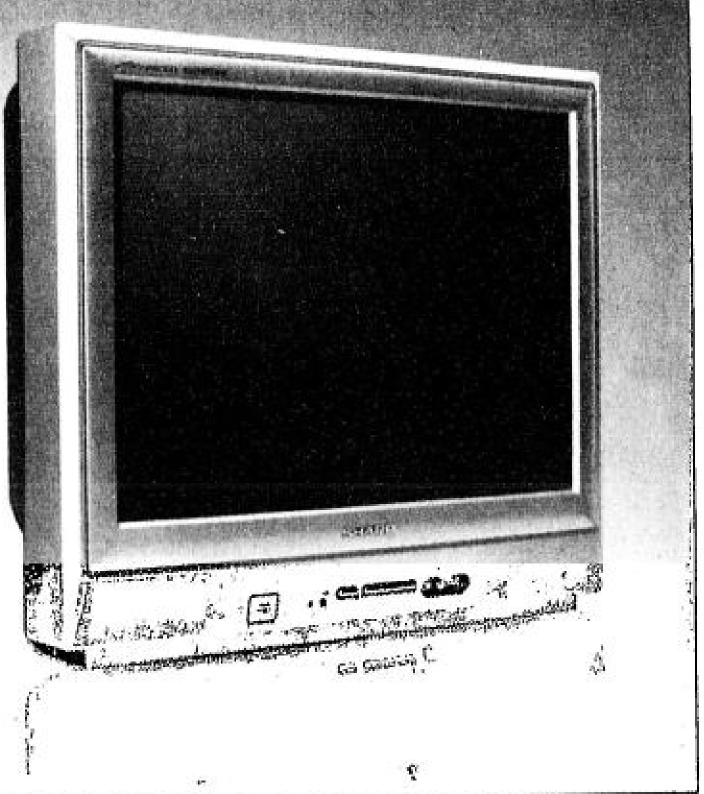
Bring your family closer, watch TV together. This classy design is tailor fit to be the main attraction in your living room. Plus, with its dual side speaker design, the superior quality sound can be enjoyed by everyone in the room. Now that's family oriented.

THE STYLISH SILVER PANEL, BOTTOM SPEAKER, SPACE SAVER DESIGN.

Save on space, not on style. The bottom speaker design and 21-inch view screen makes this stylish TV perfect for your bedroom.







WHATEVER LOOKS GOOD TO YOU, IT'S SHARP.

Energy-saving function. Adjustable screen brightness to conserve electric power.

Great Connection. The Video/Audio output line terminals allow you to connect audio amplifiers and monitors, while the Audio/Video IN terminals let you hook-up your VCR, DVD, and VCD players.

Stand-out sound. Enhanced audio technology with MTS/SAP function on selected models.

Blue screen display. A cool blue screen display comes on in case of poor channel signal.

Selected models are available in 21, 25 and 29 inch variants.

The Sharp Flat TV Series

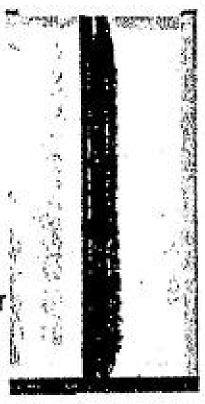
EVERYTHING'S BETTER IF IT'S SHARP.

www.sharp.ph

Top things to consider when buying an appliance.

Refrigerator

Size- consider the demand of your family before you decide on the size of your refrigerator. Take note also of the amount of space you have in your kitchen before you buy a new refrigerator.



Defrost function- some refrigerators need not be defrosted manually. Automatic defrost will cost a little more but will make cleaning a lot easier.

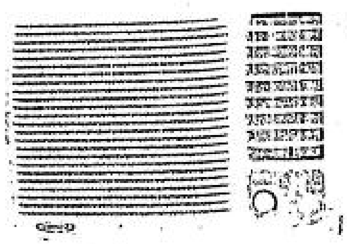
Shelf space- make sure the shelf space of the refrigerators is at par with your requirements. You don't want a too big ref. or a too small ref., don't you?

Air-conditioner

Horsepower- this measures the cooling power of your unit.

EER- this measures how efficient your unit is in using energy. The higher the EER, the more efficient it is in energy consumption. Using an aircon may skyrocket your electric bill, so make sure you buy the more efficient ones.

Control function- manual, timer and remote are basically your options. Convenience comes with a price, so if you think you can forgo the remote to save a few thousand bucks, then it's definitely your call.

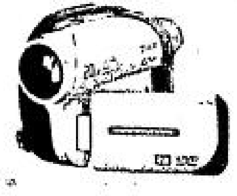


Video Camera/Digital Still Camera

Resolution- this measures how clear the picture will be. Think of special moments captured in quality.

Storage- this is a very important consideration in buying a camera. For videocams, you have a lot of options like hi8, minidv, DVD and hard disk storage all of which have its pros and cons. For digital cameras, storage capacity, measured in megabytes, will tell you just how much photos you can save.

Zoom function- in buying a camera, pay more attention to optical zoom than digital zoom. Zooming power will depend more on optical than digital.



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Canon
Delighting You Always

LET OUR TECHNOLOGY MOVE YOU.

Capture still photos and record videos simultaneously with Photo DV.

Get photo and video output with vibrant, lifelike quality with the Canon exclusive DIGIC DV Imaging Processor.

Reduce glare and ghosting and wobble blurs. Expect only images with exceptional clarity, contrast and resolution with Superb Optical Performance.

Enjoy home movies with a theater-like viewing experience when you record in True High Resolution 16:9 Widescreen.

POWERED BY DiG!C DV

Canon Digital Camcorders.

NEW ELURA 100
• 1.33 megapixels
• 20x Optical Zoom

Get a free carrying case, miniDV tape for all models; and battery pack for selected models - ZR700, Optura 50, Optura 60, Optura 600 and Optura S1

ZR100 • 680,000 pixels • 20x Optical Zoom
ZR400 • 1.33 megapixel CCD • 14x Optical Zoom
NEW ZR500 • 680,000 pixels • 25x Optical Zoom
NEW ZR600 • 680,000 pixels • 25x Optical Zoom
NEW ZR700 • 680,000 pixels • 25x Optical Zoom
OPTURA 50 • 2.2 megapixels • 10x Optical Zoom
OPTURA 60 • 2.2 megapixels • 14x Optical Zoom
OPTURA 600 • 4.3 megapixels • 10x Optical Zoom
OPTURA S1 • 2.2 megapixels • 10x Optical Zoom

Insist on an original warranty issued by Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc.

Promo Period: April 16 to June 30, 2006. Per DTI-NCR Permit No.2449 Series of 2006.

Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc. 2F Marvin Plaza, 2153 Don Chino Roces Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City
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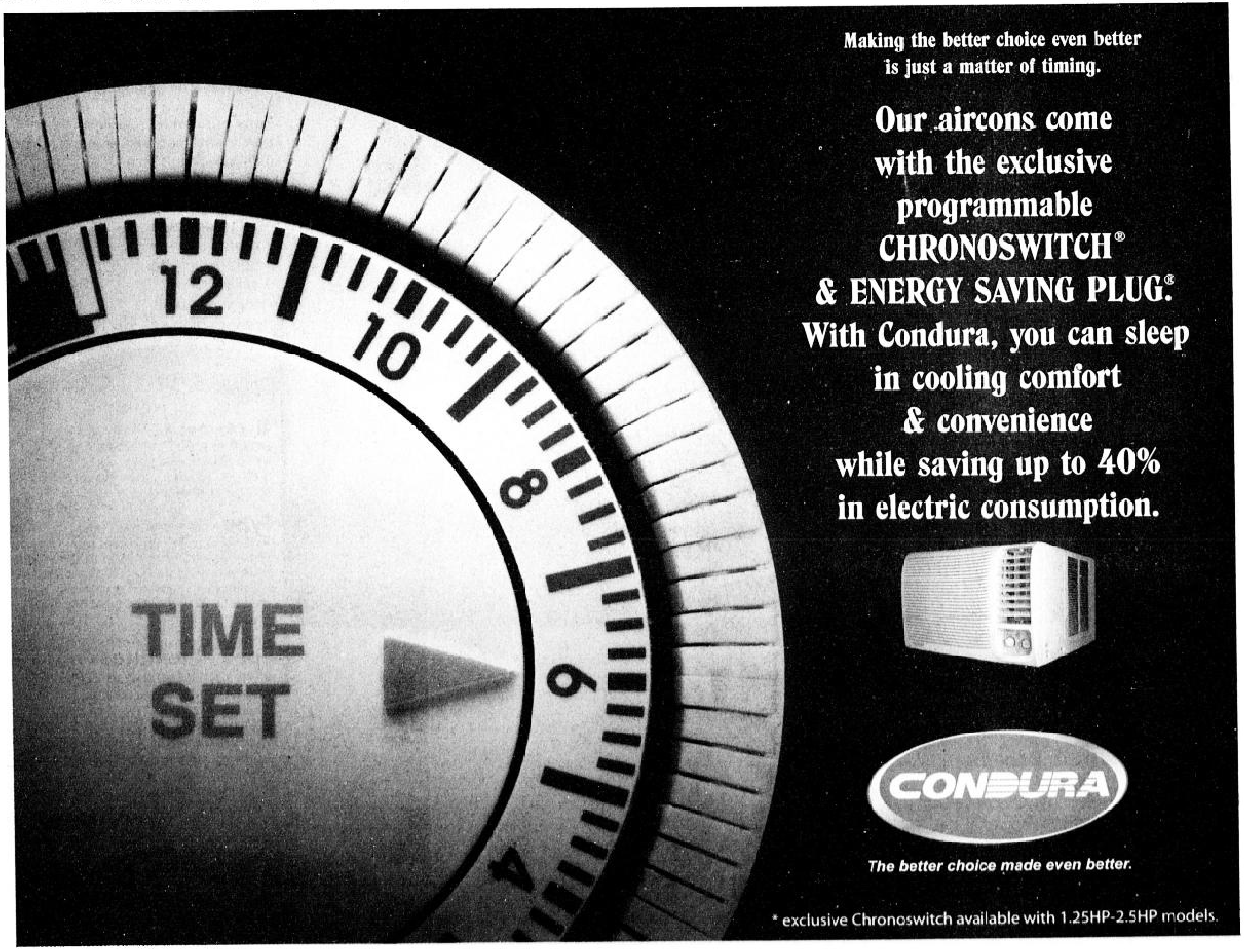

Making the better choice even better
is just a matter of timing.

Our aircons come
with the exclusive
programmable
CHRONOSWITCH®
& ENERGY SAVING PLUG®
With Condura, you can sleep
in cooling comfort
& convenience
while saving up to 40%
in electric consumption.

CONDURA

The better choice made even better.

* exclusive Chronoswitch available with 1.25HP-2.5HP models.

ABENSON

Cool Summer Pick a Prize Promo

Over 1 million worth of prizes to be won! Get a chance to pick out over 40,000 prizes!

SONY
10 Sony Discman

Canon
10 Canon Digicam

NOKIA
10 Nokia 6020

10 Apple Ipod Shuffle

Additional picks for Pluscard holders

30,000 plastic fans
10,000 water tumblers

PHILIPS
10 Philips DVD

SONY
10 Sony Videocam

Use your Metrobank card to get more chances of winning!

Every P5,000 purchase entitles you to pick a prize! Over 40,000 prizes to be given away!

Promo period: April 28 to June 25. Per DTI permit no. 2381 series of 2006. see flyers for details.
METROBANK
VISA
ABENSON
I'M here!

Panasonic
ideas for life

True idea

More than cool. More than clean. Panasonic Air Conditioners. It has the **Super Alleru-Buster Filter** that captures and deactivates harmful allergens to protect you and your family. Discover the Panasonic difference today.

- Super Alleru-Buster Filter
- High EER (Energy Efficiency Ratio) As high as 11.7 kJ/Wh
- Super Quiet - As low as 30dB
- 5-year warranty on compressor

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FREE PANASONIC DESK FAN
For every purchase of Window Type Air Conditioner 1Hp and above.

Per DTI [illegible] Permit No. 1164 Series of 2006

Congratulations to the first 13 winners of Abenson Pick-a-prize promo!

Sony Video Cam:
Beatrice Salumbides
Rodolfo Fauni
Evelyn Brul
Ameurfina Bondad
Glenda Carandang

Philips DVD
Rizalia Rebancos

Sony Discman
Roy Aceja Uy

Nokia 6020
Flores Maralit

Ipod 512MB
Angelito Gabriel

Canon A410
Thelma Velasquez
Ronald Garcia
Edwin Ortega
Rufino Lizardo

Top things to consider when buying an appliance

Washing Machine

Capacity- the size of your family is a big factor to consider. For 3-5 members, a capcity of 3.5-6 kgs dry load capacity would be enough, while 7 kgs. capacity is just perfect for a big family.

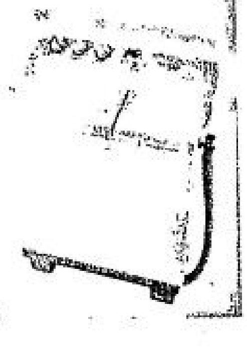
Types

Single tub - most basic wash function.

Twin Tub - combination of one tub and spinner.

Fully automatic - performs three tasks: washing, rinsing and spinning all in a single tub.

other features- some added features you may want to look at are washing program, lint filter, drain, hose system and built in fabric softener dispenser.



TV Sets

Size- Who wouldn't want to watch in a 50" TV? Then again, extravagance always comes with a price, so the bigger the size the more expensive it is.

Type- conventional, flat, projection, LCD, and plasma. These technologies were made to take home entertainment a notch higher. Before you decide, make sure you understand what these technologies have to offer.

Special features- viewing angle, digital surround and PIP are just some of the special features you might want to look at. Wide viewing angle gives you clear picture whether you're right in front or on the side. Digital surround feature will help you boost that cinematic feel into your home entertainment feel. PIP (Picture in Picture) allows you to watch several channels all at once.